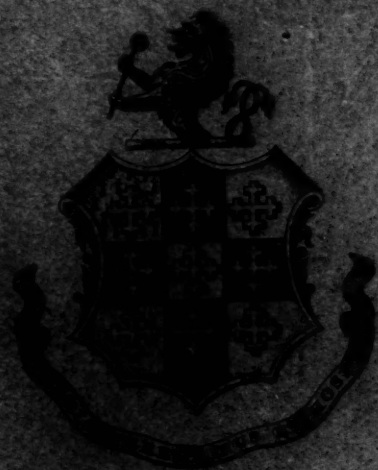
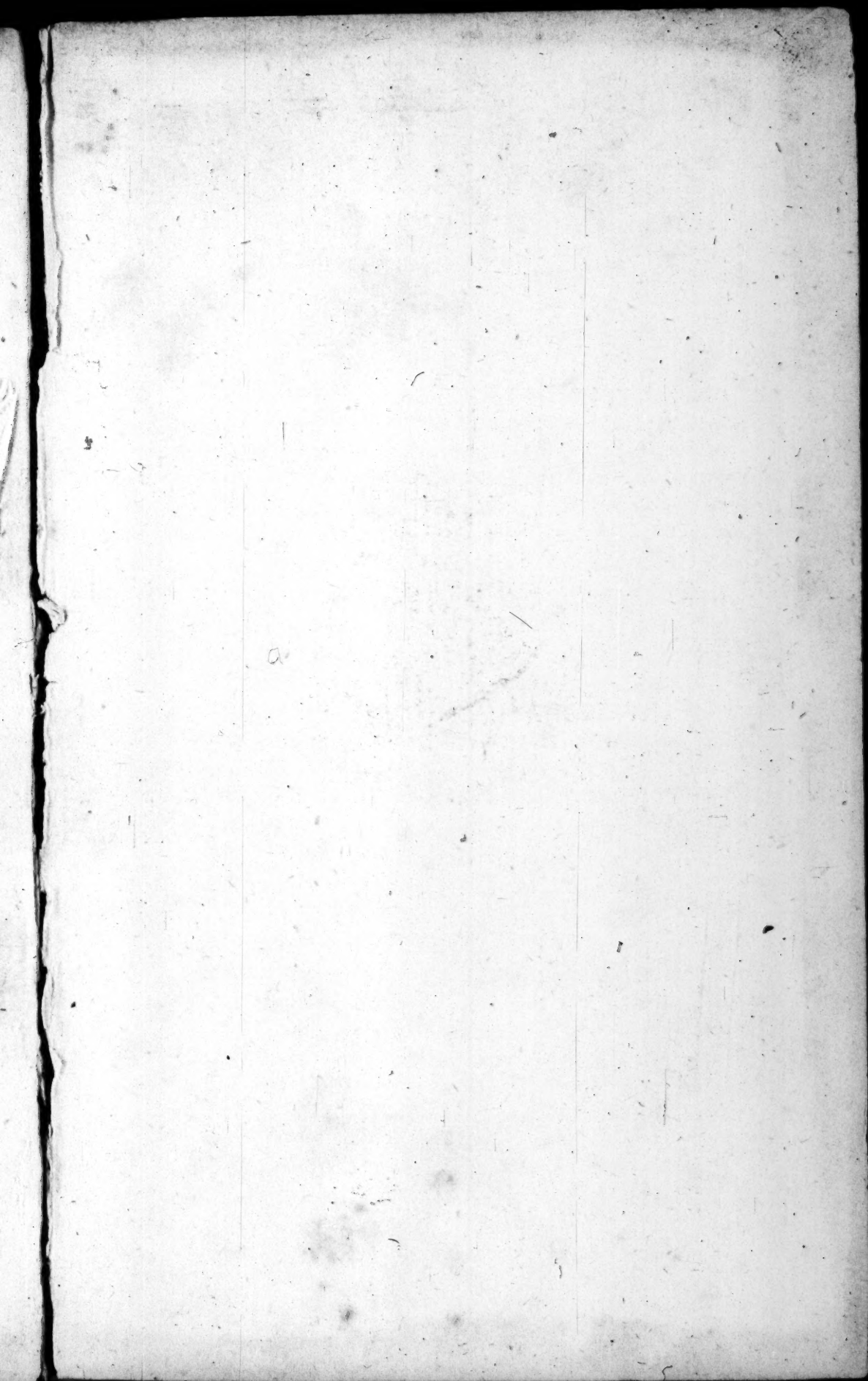




James Bonnell Esq.



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ELLEN,

COUNTESS OF

CASTLE HOWEL.



ELLEN,
COUNTESS OF
CASTLE HOWEL,
A NOVEL,
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MRS. BENNETT.

‘Others make men, I only report them.’

MONTAIGNE.

VOL. I.

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M DCC XCIV.



A P O L O G Y.

ALTHOUGH a Work sent into the World confessedly abounding in Error, will not allow a Defence, it is hoped it may admit an Apology.

The History of Ellen was composed at a Period, when the Writer was, in consequence of Engagements, entered into on laudable Motives, involved in the greatest Distress, both of Mind and Circumstances.

A P O L O G Y.

The few who know the Author's History, for the last Eighteen Months, know also, the little reason she had to apprehend the evil she has encountered. But it is to Him only, who fashioned the Mind of Man to the destined Trials, her *Sufferings* can be known.

Four Hundred Miles distant from Home, Family and Friends, a Stranger in a Country, where she was literally *taken in*, her Spirit broken, her Health impaired, her little Fortune sinking, the unoffending Victim of a Party, who forgot their Character and Manhood, to combine against the Laws they professed to Support, and the Sex they were born to protect, her Domestic Peace and *dearest pride* totally destroyed, what wonder Female Fortitude sunk under such accumulated Ills? and that as a Resource from Mental Derangement she sought,

A P O L O G Y.

sought, in the airy Regions of Fancy, any Subject which by diverting thought from "Self," might sometimes afford a temporary "oblivion of Sorrow."

At this Time, and under these circumstances, was Ellen conceived and brought to maturity: Thus, then, she is presented to the Public, as an alleviation of Grief and Misfortune; and as such, may her demerits meet indulgence from the Bosom of Sympathy, and her Errors escape the keen Edge of severe Criticism; may the Reader, happier than the Author was, and more capable than she ever will be, become at once both Judge and Protector.

LONDON, MARCH 12, 1794.

E L L E N,
COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWEL.

CHAP. I.

ON one of the dark stormy nights of December, when the wind and snow without, opposed to a cheerful circle round the blazing fire within, formed a striking contrast in favor of the latter, the family of an antient Baronet, whose seat was embosomed in the

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brown

brown mountains of North Wales, were suddenly disturbed by a noise, which called forth its native guards.

Lion, Whitefoot, Bruin and Dulcet, quietly stretched at the feet of the domestics, before a large kitchen fire, were instantly roused. Scarce had Edward Griffiths, the grey-headed butler and house steward, unbarred the folding doors, which lead into the court-yard, than the aforesaid guards rushed out in full cry; and in a second, the report of a pistol was heard.

But before I proceed further, it may be proper to describe the family and mansion, thus unusually disturbed:

Code Gwyn, is a large Gothic mansion, built at a time, when imperfect laws and civil discord obliged the chiefs of the country to consult safety, more than pleasure and convenience, in the construction and situation of their houses; it stood at the foot of a very high mountain, on the top of which still remained

maintained the ruins of a fort, which was its defence to the north; it was furrounded by innumerable trees, planted time out of mind, and forming avenues in all directions, which, as the branches entwined, excluded the solar ray: at the end of one of the front avenues ran a rapid and, now, discoloured torrent, over which was an antient stone bridge, the scene of many a bloody fray, when the gallant ancestors of the present family maintained their right against the inroads of the mountaineers.

The building itself was in the form of a fortress; it was enveloped with high walls, and furrounded by court yards; the top of the middle building was crowned with turrets, and at the four corners stood towers, whose nodding ruins seemed to tremble at the ravage of all destroying time: the entrance was through a pair of large, heavy oak, folding doors, into a spacious hall, ornamented with rusty swords, shields, helmets, trophies, banners and bucks horns. On the opposite side were a pair of correspondent doors, which

opened to the mountain; but, as a lawn intervened, free from the heavy plantations, which were carried in a serpentine form to the old fort, they admitted, what was excluded from every other part of the house, the uninterrupted light of heaven. The windows were large, heavy, and ill painted; the shutters and frames, oak, which, the long labours of household damsels had converted into mirrors: the floors and grand staircase were of the same materials, and in the same order; the furniture, particularly of the best apartments, was grand, but antique; and, though every part of the house exhibited proofs of great female management, the damask hangings, spite of neat darning, were in a ruinous state. The hall appeared to be the bond of union between the heads of the family and the domestics—there the harper had his seat, and there the avocations and labours of the day constantly closed with a dance, in which all the younger part of the inmates mingled, without a frown on the brow of pride, or presumption in the bosom of poverty.

Sir

Sir Arthur Meredith was, at the period this history opens, in his seventy-fifth year, tall, corpulent, and, apparently, robust; a profusion of white waving locks parted on his fair open forehead, and conveyed some idea of their hyacinthian beauty, before age had silvered them over; his large black eyes still retained the fire, which, when animated by sensibility, or inflamed with anger, was, in either degree, pleasing or awful; a Roman nose, florid cheeks, and teeth still perfectly sound and white, formed a face, that, from youth to age, could hardly be said to decay, since, in both, it was remarkably handsome; but time had been less lenient to his person; that had been so tortured by habitual gout, and chronic disease, as to render the use of a wheel-chair necessary, whenever he removed from one apartment to another, on which account, the room adjoining the great parlour, formerly a library, was his bed-chamber.

Lady Meredith, six years younger than Sir Arthur, was a tall, thin woman, whose

mild blue eyes, fair complexion, and a certain placidity of countenance and manners, invited confidence, and inspired respect; her heart was the seat of truth, and her tongue the law of kindness: She was the heiress of a noble Welch family, whose dignity far exceeded their wealth; her estate was exceedingly involved when she married Sir Arthur, who was of too thoughtless a turn to attend to payment of, either principal or interest; the mortgage had been fore-closed, and the estate long passed into other hands.

This venerable pair had been blessed with a numerous offspring, ^{five} ~~four~~ of whom were now living.

Edmund Meredith, who, as second son, was, according to the antient custom of the family, brought up to the church, in order to enjoy the living of Code Gwyn, into which he was inducted by his father; having lost his elder brother, was now heir to the estate and title. His character will be best told by his actions;

actions; his ostensible residence was at the rectory, but most of his time was passed at Code Gwyn.

Catherine, a virgin of thirty-two, had early in life imbibed a taste for reading. The old library abounded with romances, and she had been eighteen years dreaming of dwarfs, tournaments, distressed damsels and wounded knights: She read 'till day-light, slept 'till noon, wrote verses, took snuff and seldom wore whole stockings; but, with all her eccentricities, her heart was sensible to the finer feelings. Without a regular system of conduct, she was benevolence itself; she could seldom keep a shilling in her purse, and as it happened that there always were, in or out of the family, who wanted some article of cloathing, and as Catherine Meredith was sure to be the confidant of such wants, her wardrobe was very ill furnished.

Lewis was a lieutenant in the navy, who, on account of the eminent assistance of Sir

Arthur at a strongly contested election, had been recommended to the patronage of a naval commander; but the party interest having coalesced, and Sir Arthur of no further use in that point of view, the young man had served ten years a lieutenant, and had been now absent on the West India station four years.

Agnes, a handsome woman of twenty-six, a great manager, who, in conjunction with Mrs. Martha Griffiths, housekeeper, and sister to the butler, made the best pastry, pickles and preserves in the kingdom; she was also famous for home-made wines, mead and vinegars; the brewer had his directions from her, and she had all the merit of the fine flavored cyder; she inspected, with Mrs. Griffiths' assistance, both dairy and poultry, and if the female servants were disposed to be idle, they were sure of a lecture, for she exactly knew the quantity of knitting or spinning their other business would permit; and, as the profits were her own allowance, she was, comparatively, rich.

Mary,

Mary, a very plain girl of twenty-two, had the rage of scribbling on her: She was so happy as to have a bosom friend in the next parish, subject to the same disease; and as their correspondence, which was carried on in fictitious names, was the mutual joy of their lives, it is not impossible, but the world may be one day favored with the letters of LUCRETIA and AMANTHIS.

There was also in this family a petted grand-daughter, the posthumous child of their eldest son, who died in a decline, and was followed by a beautiful young woman, his wife, within one hour after the birth of her infant.

Sir Arthur Meredith succeeded his father in an estate of two thousand pounds a year, charged with a heavy mortgage, and younger childrens' portions.

The family lived precisely in the same style, from generation to generation; the same

number of domestics, the same mode of living, and the same rental from their farms; and having neglected to raise their tenants, equivalent to the advance of every necessary of life, these had grown into opulence, as their generous landlord had, insensibly, become involved in difficulties.

Sir Arthur, therefore, so far from discharging the debts and old incumbrances, was every day adding new ones.

John Morgan, Esq. a rich neighbour, willingly advanced to Sir Arthur, on every emergency, and the ease wherewith money was obtained, so lulled the Baronet, and he was, besides, of so easy, hospitable and benevolent a disposition, that, while he saw the long-familiar faces of his train of domestics, while his old coach held together, and the almost foundered coach horses could draw his Lady and family to church, while that family were tranquil and happy, he seldom burthened his thoughts with the state of his finances. As he

the rents came in, the steward paid them away ; when money was wanting, Mr. Morgan provided it, without giving Sir Arthur any other trouble, than just signing a parchment, by way of security, in which, indeed, lately, it had been thought proper for Mr. Edmund Meredith to join.

On the evening the disturbance happened I began to relate, the family at Code Gwyn had, according to antient custom, been dancing out the old year, and the younger part had just left the great hall on a summons to supper, when the firing a pistol called every being out, save Sir Arthur, who was lame, and his Lady, who, being subject to nervous affections, had not power to stir.

Sounds of different voices approaching the house, mingled with joyful exclamations, still more excited the wonder of Sir Arthur, when a sun-burnt young man, in blue uniform, entered and knelt before him, followed by the whole posse who had gone out, and two other

strangers; one, a square built man in blue, the other, a tall, sickly looking person, enveloped in great coats.

Lewis Meredith had nearly fallen a martyr to the climate, rather than leave his ship, when the Colonel of a regiment on the station became, unexpectedly, by the death of his uncle and cousin, a Peer of the Realm of Great Britain; some wild excesses having rendered his absence from England convenient and necessary, he had exchanged a lieutenantcy in the guards for a company in the West Indies, and after long residence was thought to be dying, when, by the opportune departure of his relation, he became a Peer, and a man of fortune. Mr. Macsheat, surgeon of the man of war to which Lewis Meredith belonged, a Scotchman of great medical knowledge, had been persuaded by the lieutenant, to give his attendance to Colonel Claverton, who wanted confidence in the Surgeon of his own company, and Meredith, out of *his little*, assisted the Colonel's very reduced purse.

The

The first thing Colonel Claverton did, on receiving the news of his good fortune, was, to take his passage home, and as nothing was so dear to him as self, and as he believed Lieutenant Meredith one of the best sailors, and Macsheathean one of the best Doctors in the world, he prevailed on the Commander in chief to give each of these officers leave to return to England, on account of health, and generously engaged to pay their passage.

Meredith, as we have said, was an invalid ; but Macsheathean's motives for accompanying his noble patient were too deep and manifold to be at this time delineated. They set sail in a Merchant-ship, which brought, them, after a tempestuous voyage, off Anglesea, where they were obliged to put in, and, to the Lieutenant's great joy, he found himself, after a few hours travel, thirty miles only from his paternal home.

The weather was intensely cold ; great quantities of snow had fallen, and, before the

mails were established, every traveller knows how tedious and difficult a journey from those parts to London was; Lord Claverton was, really, too much indisposed to undertake it, and the inns being inconvenient and ill furnished, it was with great satisfaction, he heard a chaise and four would carry them in the course of one day to a comfortable habitation.

At the rattling of the carriage over the stone bridge, the dogs, who were unused to the sound of any, but the heavy old coach wheels, took the alarm, and the foremost having reached the chaise, just as the friends were assisting the invalid out, he, who was not remarkable for patience, fired his pistol and shot the animal dead.

Never was family more united than that of Code Gwyn: Sir Arthur wept aloud on his son's neck, while his daughters were dividing their attention between their almost fainting mother and the welcome brother. Mr. Meredith

redith prest the Lieutenant to his fraternal heart, the servants crowded in, and old Griffiths sobbed.

Those exquisite sensations in some degree subsided, in respect to the strangers, and the Lieutenant had no sooner introduced Lord Claverton by name, than Griffiths hurried the domestics out of the parlour.

Meredith
Lady ~~Catherine~~ rose with dignity to welcome them; Miss Catherine figured to herself the idea of a sick knight, and advanced nearer, to take a full view of a person, whose arrival savored much of the books she had studied. Miss Agnes retired immediately to consult Mrs. Griffiths on the new arrangement of the table; and Mary, having a Lord for her subject, was determined to begin a letter, that very night, to her friend, Miss Peggy Jones.

Sir Arthur and Mr. Meredith were in-born gentlemen; they respected, without being

ing abashed at the presence of a nobleman, and the true politeness, inherent to the character they supported, rendered their compliments easy to their guests, and had the effect, of composing the rest of the family: mutual introductions took place, an easy chair was drawn next the fire for the invalid, Miss Agnes sent in a salver of cordials, and old Griffiths set about some additions to the table and side-board, with the activity of twenty-five.

The company being thus comfortably seated, congratulating each other on the event of the night, were, a second time, alarmed by a voice of female distress: The folding doors were thrown open, and a young girl appeared, tears streaming from her eyes, her hands and face smeared with blood, and dragging in her arms the still bleeding carcass of poor Lion. A sight so new and unexpected, struck them with amazement, particularly the strangers.

“My dear girl,” said Mr. Meredith, “where have you been, in the joyful confusion
of

of the night I had quite forgot you." "See," said she, sinking under the weight of the dead animal, "see what the strange men have done! O, my dear dear Lion," throwing herself by his side, "what harm had you done to them? you only took care of your own master and mistress, and they have killed you for being better than themselves."

Lion was a great favorite; joy at the arrival of their young master had licensed the intrusion of the servants, regret for the animal, again brought them to the door; an awkward-girl, niece to the housekeeper, sometimes maid, sometimes champion, and, oftener, companion to the distressed damsel on the ground, pushed in, and taking the dog in her strong arms, desired the fair mourner to be comforted; for a very good reason, all the crying in the world would not bring Lion to life; and, for her part, she was sure the strangers were negers, for none others would hurt such a harmless creature; and, indeed, she thought Master Lewis might a come to his

his own home, without bringing savage negroes with him." at the end of this speech Winifred Griffiths thought proper to stalk out with the dead animal in her arms, without deigning to cast a look around.

"My dear child," said Lady Meredith, "we are all sorry for poor Lion ; but you must not forget your uncle."

The Lieutenant, though very fond of this young relative, could not help laughing at her appearance, which she observing, retreated behind Sir Arthur's chair, who advised her to go and compose herself, "In the morning," said he, smiling and looking at the blood, "you will not be quite so much in dishabille."

This gentle hint turned her attention to her own figure ; " Gracious !" she exclaimed, and happening to encounter the face of Macslean, distended into a broad grin, ran out of the room covered with confusion.

"A very extraordinary young lady this," said the peer, smiling ironically.

"She is a very good girl, my Lord," answered Lady Meredith, "the accident to Lion wholly engrosses her; you will like her better, when you know her more."

"Every body likes Ellen," said Sir Arthur.

"Your grand-daughter, I presume?"

Lady Meredith bowed.

"Lion was the largest of his kind," continued his Lordship, "I ever knew to be a lady's favorite."

"His appearance, it must be confessed, was a little formidable," answered the Surgeon.

"I expected him at my throat," returned the Peer.

"I dare say, my Lord," said Miss Meredith, gravely advancing, "you took him for some miscreant Knight in disguise?"

"Madam!"

"Madam!"

"I say, my Lord, I presume your prowess would not have been exerted against the poor dog, had you believed him to have been a dog; but, as Code Gwyn has certainly the air of an enchanted castle, and Lion was so uncourteous, it was natural for you to conclude he was some disguised enemy; I am extremely concerned your arms, which have, doubtless, been bright in conquest, should be disgraced by so ignoble a subject; I heartily rejoice, however, the deed was done with pistols, which are, indeed, weapons fit only for the canine race; your bright sword, my Lord, which I make no doubt you have often drawn in defence of virtuous damsels, and renowned knights, remain unfullied by a mean contest."

"Madam!" repeated his Lordship in astonishment.

Miss Meredith had made her speech, and retired to her seat.

When

When the reader knows how famous Lord Claverton was for rescuing "virtuous damsels," and what reason he had to admire "valorous Knights," they will account for the entire change of countenance Miss Meredith's absurd speech produced; he complained of indisposition, wished to retire, and, with a cold determined air declined partaking of the supper, which was setting on the table; the surgeon offered to attend him, but his services were rejected; the valet was summoned, and so *exit* my Lord.

Perhaps a happier set never met than the supper party this night at Code Gwyn: Lewis sat between Sir Arthur and my Lady; Catherine rested her arms on the table, while she defended her address to Lord Claverton against the good-natured attacks of Mr. Meredith, whose romantic turn, though he knew he could not cure, he wished to curb. Doctor Macshean was *now* listening to Miss Agnes's process of making distilled waters, *now* saying civil things to Mary, and *now* drinking bumper

bumper after bumper of Welch ale to Sir Arthur, and his messmate's health; and we must confess, the Baronet and his son pledged him until it was time for the ladies to retire.

CHAP. II.

LORD Claverton's ill humour was not lessened by the morning's reflections; he, very charitably, consigned Code Gwyn and its inhabitants to the devil; and cursing their outré civility, made two resolutions before he rose from the bed of down, which, for neatness and comfort, might repose a Prince. First then, he recollected several circumstances it was no longer agreeable to remember, such as acts, innumerable, of kindness from Lieutenant Meredith, and which, therefore, having

having no further use for, it would be convenient to bury in oblivion. To break, therefore, with the hospitable family, under whose roof, he was at that moment enjoying comforts, he which to had long been a stranger, was, resolution the first. And, secondly, to leave Code Gwyn, and all its horrid inhabitants, the most disgusting of whom, was the awkward girl and her friend Lion, the instant a carriage could be procured. He had just arranged these important manœuvres, when Mrs. Griffiths bounced into his chamber, and having discovered he was awake, withdrew the window curtains, opened the shutters, and asked if his Lordship was ready for breakfast, which, on account of his sickliness, Miss Agnes had ordered to be sent to his chamber.

“ Sickliness !” returned he. }

“ Oh, aye, to be sure, my Lord, you does look very deadly, but our clear air, and goats whey.” —

“ Curse

"Curse your whey, you stupid old devil," interrupted his Lordship, in a kind of inward voice, which, as Mrs. Griffiths was a little hard of hearing, excited her attention, without making her acquainted with his invectives.

"Did your Lordship please to speak?"

"Where is my scoundrel?"

"Where's, what—" The valet at that instant entered. "Oh, Mr. Joseph, your Master wants you." He was followed by two rosy cheeked damsels, carrying each plates of different eatables; three sorts of rolls, buttered and dry toast, biscuits, cakes, eggs and home made sweetmeats; then came Edward Griffiths, with a maffy tea equipage of the last century, and after him a straight-haired footman, with a large tea kettle.

"My Lord wants something, I cannot make out what, to be sure, poor gentleman, his lungs be infected."

"Are

"Are you laying in provisions for a siege?" cried Lord Claverton, in a maze, as he viewed the breakfast.

"Dear me! my Lord," answered the old housekeeper, officiously arranging the tea-board, and smiling exultingly, "Peace and Plenty, that's our way at Code Gwyn."

"Are the whole family coming here to breakfast?"

"Here! oh dear, no, they be all in the great hall, as merry as grigs, God blefs 'em, but here, lord 'tis new year's day; I wish your Lordship a happy new year, if please God to *restore* you.

Lord Claverton's looks testified disgust and impatience. Mrs. Griffiths saw something was the matter, and as she seldom was at the trouble of puzzling herself about causes, stumbled on the one most mortifying to our Peer.

"Well, well, don't despair; come, to be sure you do look mortal bad, and Miss Agnes

thinks as how you have been poisoned by the blacks, and if so be ——”

“Turn the beldame out of the room,” said his Lordship, in a rage he no longer sought to repel.

Joseph was a shrewd fellow, who liked too well the entertainment at Code Gwyn, to venture affronting, on his *own* account, a lady, whose authority in the servants-hall was entire; he saw his Lord was decidedly angry; but Mrs. Griffiths, who began to suspect the same thing, had not the most distant idea of the cause; her preceding the breakfast into his chamber; her remarks on his bad looks, and prayer for their amendment, were so many different means of paying her court to a Lord, and obeying Miss Agnes, who had particularly charged her over night, to mind and credit their mutual management in the morning repast, she had no apprehension *she* could have given offence, it was therefore *her* turn to look amazed. Joseph beckoned, nodded, and winked in vain. To be turned out

out of a room, or be spoken hastily to, was perfectly new to Mrs. Griffiths, who, with the garrulous propensity of old age, blended such an unaffected goodness of heart, such an eagerness to enter into the misfortunes of every being, for the sake of alleviating; as well as talking of them; she had passed from Lady Meredith's pretty *young* waiting maid, to the deaf old housekeeper, in an unimpeached gradation of honesty and affection: In short, it was not more dangerous to rouse *Lion* than affront her — she ejaculated, "Deliver me, good Lord!"

"Get out of the room, you canting old hypocrite," roared Lord Claverton.

"*You a Lord!*" said the old Lady, with bitter emphasis, and she stalked slowly out of the chamber, all her cambrian blood mounting to her cheeks, without deigning to look one way or the other.

"This moment get me a carriage; let me get out of this infernal family."

We have said what were his Lordship's resolutions, but it was not to be. The snow had fallen so heavy in the night, the road over the mountains was impassable; no carriage could be got nearer than ten miles, and it was not safe to venture even a horse, as the wind set, the snow drifting against the side of a declivity, by which they must pass, in their way to England. So unaccountable was the aversion Lord Claverton had taken to Code Gwyn, that could the journey be undertaken with any thing less than *personal* danger, it would not have been delayed; but ill health, change of climate, the heat he had left, the cold he had to encounter, contributed to reconcile him to the warm room, which he resolved to leave as little as possible, while he was compelled to stay: * He had just sent away half a dozen plates of provision, and set down to his coffee, when the Surgeon and Lieutenant paid him the compliments of the morning.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the prudential resolves which an hour before, were the result of his pillow cogitations, he did not think proper to commence his operations, when it was uncertain how long he might remain under the roof he despised, but his invincible dislike to the whole family, determined him to make his indisposition an excuse for avoiding their society—he had the head-ach, his nerves were shattered, he could not bear conversation: He had in *reality*, been often attacked in this way before he embarked for England, it was therefore, no unnatural conclusion, that his complaints were returned, the Lieutenant very good humouredly offered to sit in his chamber, though he added, that his mother made a great point, of his accompanying her to church.

“To church!” cried Lord Claverton, staring.

“Just so, my Lord,” answered Dr. Macshean, “though it is three miles off, and the snow two foot deep.”

"Oh, pray go to church," said Lord Claverton, ironically, "I hope all the curious set will follow."

The Lieutenant, a little piqued, assured him, that excepting those necessary to attend on his Lordship, and his father, the whole family *would follow*.

Lord Claverton knew what was right, tho' he seldom condescended to act up to that knowledge, and apologized; he, however, would not accept of the company of either of his fellow travellers, but insisted on their obeying orders. They had not been gone five minutes, when Joseph, who had the gift of penetrating his Lordship's disposition, in a very superior degree, and consequently understood the Code Gwyn family were objects of his contempt, came in, with a satyrical grin on his face, to beg his Lordship would go into the gallery, and see the old family cart take up its load.

"The

"The gallery! where the devil's that?"

Joseph opened a door opposite to the one they entered from the stair-case into a long gallery, furnished with a great number of old portraits, with a very large painted bow window at the further end, which served only to make "*darkness visible*."

More for exercise, than curiosity, Lord Claverton stalked down, but instead of troubling himself about the family *curr*, as Joseph so wittily termed the coach, was returning, when, through the gloom at the farther end, he saw a door open, and a form approach, which his warm imagination likened to the houries of Mahometan Paradise.

It was a slim elegant female, dressed in a callico jacket and coat, short enough to discover a beautiful turned ankle, open at the neck, and arms as white as snow, a profusion of light brown hair in natural ringlets, shaded her alabaster forehead, a pair of lovely brows

and lashes, two shades darker, gave her clear blue eyes a hazle cast, her features were more beautiful than regular, her lips of the deepest rose pink, half open, displayed a set of small white teeth, her complexion pure and elegant, and her form a model of symmetry; she tript along the gallery, tying on a straw hat, and was followed by a short thick black eyed girl, carrying a white dimity cloak and a pair of mittens.

Lord Claverton was struck — such a creature to be an inhabitant of that dark dungeon! his ardent gaze as she drew near raised a crimson glow over the most lovely face and fairest neck he had ever seen—she courtesied and went on.

“What a Hebe!” exclaimed the Peer.

“Her name is Ellen,” quoth the waiting damsel, also courtesying, and passed on.

Lord

Lord Claverton having followed the fair vision, as he was half inclined to think her, with his eyes, hastily returned to the bow window to see if it made any part of the loading Joseph described. She was lifted up the step, light as a Gossamer, by Lewis Meredith, the carriage drove very slowly off, but Lord Claverton's eyes were rivetted to the spot. Joseph was at hand and as penetrating as ever.

"Shall I make any enquiries about that young lady, my Lord?"

"This moment."

Joseph descended to the servants hall, Lord Claverton returned to his chamber, the face, shape, complexion, and innocence, he met in the gallery, still before his eyes. Joseph soon returned with a meaning face. It was the identical young lady whose warm embraces, though they might animate a statue, failed to recall the mastiff to life, and her maid, the same civil being, who had bestowed on his Lordship the epithet of neger.

Lord Claverton had lived some years abroad, his connexions were a *little* among the fallow beauties, whom Plutus tempted to abandon their country and health together, and a *great deal* among their wretched slaves, the face of every young woman he had seen since his arrival in Britain, appeared therefore to advantage, but *this girl* was beyond any thing he remembered in his connexions even before he left England; very ignorant, and indeed foolish, the tears she shed for her dog evinced her, but no matter, he should have the less trouble in getting her, which if he liked her as well at the next interview, he was resolved upon. 'Tis true, beautiful as Ellen was, it was the beauty of a tall child; but neither did *that matter*, it was a fault every day would mend.

"Joe, said the noble Lord, I'll have that girl." (Joe thought as much from the moment he met her in the gallery) "Therefore (picking his teeth) do you contrive to know every thing about her."

"Her maid is so cursed ugly! my Lord."

"That's your affair, I shall only keep the Mistress—Damn it, I wish I had not been so ill this morning."

"To be sure, my Lord, that is a pity, because you cannot possibly leave your room to-day, and the family —"

"Oh, curse the family, don't talk of *them*, but, d'ye hear, you may get acquainted with the old beldame."

Joe promised to do his best and my Lord's impatience soon sent him on his honorable mission. Meanwhile his Lordship very deliberately began to lay the plan of his future establishment, in which, however, he considered it as *too* great an honor for a little country rustic to be included, and therefore intended to keep her for his hours of relaxation, in a small box, near the metropolis.

It was thus the noble Peer contrived to elude the enemy while the *simple* Knight, under whose hospitable roof he was entertained, not being able to go to church, read

the lessons of the day to Mr. Griffiths, and while his as simple family were asking the blessing of the Being they served on the new year, a custom still adhered to in many parts of antient Britain.

The return from over-sea of the son of a beloved chief, was news too interesting to his tenants and neighbours to be concealed; it had spread over the Parish with the addition that Master Lewis brought home with him a Lord, and another great man, who would unquestionably be at church with the family on so great a festival as New Year's Day. The folly of these ignorant people was pardonable, since it was impossible *they* could conceive how little respect the lords and great men of the world pay even to the Sabbath day:

But although the peasants waded through the snow, some to say their prayers, others to see the strangers, a lord was not the very strangest sight they had ever seen, for there actually was at that time a nobleman, who resided, from June 'till February
every

every year, at his Castle, within three miles of Code Gwyn church, and though a lord is a Lord every where, they are not, we presume, all exactly alike; the Lord of Castle Howel for Instance, was (as reported) a cross, proud, reserved, old man; whereas, him at Code Gwyn was, if not young, much younger, and moreover, had come from beyond sea with Sir Arthur's son, who was well remembered to be the best hearted, best tempered youth in the world, and who, as they had been constant hearers of all his dangers, either from his own letters or the weekly papers, which Sir Arthur read to them, was expected, if he escaped the perils of the sea, to be a second Benbow, or Matthews at least, two of the greatest Admirals they had ever heard of.

Code Gwyn Church was crowded, and a general bustle in the congregation, with whispers that hissed through the aisles, saluted the young officer as he led his mother to the pew, followed by Dr. Macsheat, his sisters, and niece, This had scarce subsided, and
Mr.

Mr. Meredith mounted the pulpit, before a second object of curiosity, and wonder appeared, in the person of a lady of the *haut ton*, whose chariot wheels had rattled the few villagers who were *not* at church into consternation, and whose dress, (the extremity of the fashion) free step, and undaunted manner, had the same effect on those who were.

Lady Margaret Howel very rarely visited any place of worship, but being, to her infinite mortification, confined to the dull mansion of Castle Howel, and having heard of the arrival of the Lieutenant and his friends, came to Code Gwyn church, in hopes to see something human in the shape of man. Up then tripped Lady Margaret to Sir Arthur's pew, and astonished Macsheat with the ease of her fashionable courtesy—"Who," said he, in a whisper to Catherine, "is that old lady?"

"Old Lady," replied Catherine, "she would deem you a very uncourteous knight to call her so; she is a spinster of great fashion, has read very little."

The service began, Macsnean's observations were full of matter: Lady Margaret's rolling *grey* eyes often encountered his more penetrating black ones, and those she saw, did not indicate any of that cold reserve, which had frozen her sensibility in the parson, who, sometime back, she condescended to think tolerable.

Lady Margaret had an entire aversion to her family name, and finding her small fortune an insurmountable objection to any exchange, was taking great pains to remove it, by accumulations, at her brother's expence, and had it already in her power, amply to reward the kindness of any gentleman who should assist her in converting Lady Margaret Howel into Lady Margaret any thing else.

Mr. Macsnean was the younger son of a reduced Scotch family, poor, dependent, and excepting his patron the Peer, (for whom, by the bye, he had not the most profound respect) friendless, he had been taught by many

a bitter lesson of experience, the art of accommodating himself to the whims and caprices, and even tyranny of *others*, when his own disposition, with power, would have qualified him to be as whimsical, capricious, and tyrannical, as the *best*. Lady Margaret came to church in an elegant carriage, with two footmen in splendid liveries, and as he perceived, notwithstanding an immoderate bloom on her cheek, she was an old lady with young inclinations, he concluded from her equipage she possessed the *ne plus ultra* of *his* wishes, in consequence, he certainly looked, and said, as many passionate things as the *time* and place would admit. Lady Margaret, in wonderful good humour, invited herself home with the Code Gwyn family, merely to congratulate Sir Arthur on the arrival of his son, whom she obliged to take a seat in her carriage, and although she had made a thousand protestations against ever venturing on the mountainous side of Castle Howel, *now* condescended to be dragged, step by step, after the
old

old coach, in momentary danger of having her carriage broken, and herself thrown out.

When the great court bell rang, and Lord Claverton strided across the gallery, to steal a glance at the beautiful rustic, he was not a little surprised at recognizing Lady Margaret Castle Howel, whose face had many years been a fixture at every public place of polite resort; he swore, the old hag had laid her fangs on the Lieutenant, and congratulated himself on his resolution not to stir out of his apartment; but a quick foot ascending the stair, soon made him regret every moment passed in it.

Ellen, more beautiful from the glow which air and exercise left on her cheek, her hair disordered by the wind, the smile of content dimpling round her mouth, and her natural vivacity increased by the happiness the arrival of the Lieutenant diffused in the family, gaily tripped to her apartment, followed by her faithful shadow Winifred, and again dropped

dropped a courtesy to his Lordship as she passed.

“Heavens! what an object for attention—for admiration—for ruin.”

His eyes followed 'till she was lost at the farther extremity of the gloomy gallery, when he retired slowly to his room.

CHAP. III.

GOOD humour and conviviality now reigned in every part of Code Gwyn House, save that where his Lordship was honorably agitated by feelings not altogether new, though more violent than he had lately experienced. The ease with which he had a minute before settled the business vanished, difficulties

difficulties innumerable presented themselves to his imagination, but it is the province of daring minds to overcome difficulties — by daring I do not mean bravery, no ; there is a sort of resolution, more bold than bravery ; more persevering than courage ; more witty than wise ; more pliant than good humour— of this sort was the daring of Lord Claverton : The girl he was resolved to have, but how that glorious point was to be accomplished ; how a mind formed in the very bosom of purity was to be corrupted ; how, after succeeding, to escape the sober dignified resentment of Mr. Meredith, or the passionate revenge of the young officer, for the breach of every law of hospitality, were points that began to puzzle him.

A boiled chicken and white soup, which Mrs. Griffiths pronounced proper for a *sick body*, was served, and sent back untouched, on which, as loss of appetite was, in her opinion, the *greatest*, if not *only* sign of danger, she very gravely presented herself at the elbow

bow of Lady Meredith, and assured her, the Lord, above stairs, was in a very bad way.

Lady Margaret's warm congratulations, her politeness to the Lieutenant, and her condescension to every body, had quite eclipsed Lord Claverton; and, as to Mr. Macsheat, *he* was as deeply engaged in laying plans, as his Lordship himself could possibly be, and with more probability of success; he by this time understood, Lady Margaret was the only sister of the Earl of Castle Howel; he saw, notwithstanding a vast deal of powder, she was grey; and a vast deal of rouge, she was ugly; but it was a desirable thing to be related to an old Earl, and a very undesirable one to be dependent on a profligate Peer, he therefore "sighed and looked." But deeply engaged as his externals were in besieging Lady Margaret, and as his internals were in arranging every advantage therefrom, he did not forget the possibility of a disappointment. The instant Mrs. Griffiths mentioned his Lordship's illness, he arose from table with an
apologizing

apologizing bow, and hastened to his patron, followed by the Lieutenant.

Lord Claverton was in so profound a reverie, that the Doctor began a florid apology before he perceived they were in the room; the sight of the Lieutenant, however, restored the invalid to his usual presence of mind, and "Ha! Lewis, how are you?" with a smile, that proved he had not taken offence, and an animation of countenance, that also evidenced nearer approach to convalescence than he had yet observed, set the Doctor's mind at rest. In short, it was one part of his Lordship's present scheme to be wonderfully good humoured; he attributed his want of appetite to confinement, determined on a reform, and, being most cordially invited, actually condescended to join the happy party below.

Lady Margaret, whose tedious years had rolled insipidly on between London and Castle Howel, perfectly remembered Captain, now
Lord

Lord Claverton, and, as I have before said, Lord Claverton knew her Ladyship, they were, or professed to be, very happy, at so unexpected a rencontre; their mutual congratulations kept the company standing, to the great edification of the domestics, who were fixed in open-mouthed admiration, 'till Sir Arthur from his wheel-chair interrupted the fine breeding of his quality guests.

"Set a chair here," said he, pointing to his right hand, "My Lord, you are welcome." The benevolent smile, the sincere look, and cordial shake of the hand, dressed the *welcome* in nature's most attractive garb; truth, honesty, and inbred politeness, graced every action of Sir Arthur Meredith.

"Frankness in him was not the effect of familiarity, but the cause of it," he was a gentleman of *god's making*. Lord Claverton took the offered seat with more pleasure, as on part of the gouty stool, at her grandfather's feet, her blue eyes raised to his, with a
mixture

mixture of love and reverence, sat the blooming Ellen.

There were present, who annually dined at Code Gwyn, on New Year's Day, besides the guests we have named, Mr. James, the Surgeon, Apothecary, Man-Midwife, and Physician of the village, Mr. Percival Evelyn, a youth of eighteen, an eleve of the rector's, and John Morgan, Esq. Lord of the next Manor, before introduced to the reader, as the convenient money-lending friend of Sir Arthur Meredith, a gentleman who will make a conspicuous figure in the events of this history, and who will gradually unfold his own character, I shall therefore only say, few men addressed their superiors with more servility, or treated his equals with more apparent frankness and plausibility, which was indeed extended to such of his inferiors as were not dependent *on* or in debt *to* him; these sort of people he made in every sense feel *their own* littleness, and *his* consequence: he was a perfect adept in the whole art of bowing, and
managed

managed the bend of his body according to the rank or riches of those he addressed, with an exactitude that would have done honor to Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant himself—to every branch of the Code Gwyn family Esquire Morgan bowed particularly low, to Lord Claverton and Lady Margaret Howel still lower.

His *Lordship's* eyes were fixed on Ellen, Esquire Morgan perceived she was grown tall, and prodigiously improved, he drank Sir Arthur's health, and a happy new year, in a glass of ale, which he declared he preferred to Champagne.

"Who is this gentleman?" whispered Macsheatan to Miss Meredith.

"He is the dæmon of avarice!" replied she, "and owns the great house on the hill; he buys every body's estates, and lives in a corner of his own mansion."

Macsheatan

Macshean knew enough of the world to be certain it was not worth his while to take a look from Lady Margaret to bestow on John Morgan, Esquire.

The good humour of the company was increased by the addition to their society, the Lieutenant rallied his sisters on their being old maids; Miss Meredith gloried in the title, rather than unite herself to any man who had not achieved some great adventure, and given proofs both of valour and love.

'Squire Morgan called the young man to order, he declared the ladies were all too young to fall under that odium; he was warmly seconded by Mr. Macshean, who had his doubts whether a woman of twice Miss Meredith's age could be properly called an old maid; a woman, who could feel and inspire the tender passion, was not surely of that description; there *were women*, some of whom he had the honor to *know*, who had passed the childhood of their days, but who were still

objects of desire, and more worthy the attachment of rational beings than it was possible a mere girl could be.

Three persons, and three only of the company fully comprehended Mr. Macsheat—these were Lady Margaret, Lord Claverton, and 'Squire Morgan, the latter bowing very low to her Ladyship, replied, "exce signum."

When the ladies retired, the noble invalid attended them, and the Rector's young eleve, who appeared to be quite at home, after helping Ellen to adjust Sir Arthur's cushion, followed her into the drawing room.

Percival Evelyn was too handsome and too attentive to Ellen, to escape Lord Claverton's notice; the plainness of his dress, his unobtrusive manners, the blush that crimsoned his naturally pale interesting face, when called on to give his sentiments by the Rector, the diffidence and bashfulness that accompanied all his actions, shewed him a very despicable

despicable rival, but a rival his Lordship feared he certainly was, and was therefore particularly watchful of both Ellen and him.

The night being very cold and dark, Lady Margaret was prevailed on to accept the second best room; cards and the gentlemen appeared together, but the harp in the hall was a more welcome summons to the younger part, and even Lord Claverton would dance if Ellen would be his partner.

Whether it was the disaster of her dead favorite, which Winifred did not fail to remind her of; whether his Lordship was a bad partner, or from what other cause, certainly this arrangement did not particularly please Ellen; she was, however, so fond of dancing, the gloom vanished by degrees, she chatted, sung, and laughed herself so completely into Lord Claverton's heart, that before they parted for the night it had struck him, a little polish would render her fit to grace his Peerage.

The education of Ellen had indeed been extraordinary; she had learnt to read of the Rector, to write of his Clerk, to dance of old Griffiths, to sing and play of the family Harper, and to ride of the Bailiff: In this exercise she was so expert, that it was common for her maid Winifred and herself to catch a horse on the mountain, no matter whose, and gallop two or three miles without bridle or saddle; she was very famous for discovering birds nests, and minded not any height to get at them; ready to follow any body's hounds through thick and thin, and was even an excellent shot. With all these accomplishments she was now but in her fifteenth year, with the face of Venus, the form of Diana, and the greatest romp in the world; yet the natural sense she was blessed with, the example of Lady Meredith and her daughters, the sentiments she imbibed from them, and the constant practice of every virtue, even in her unpolished state of nature, rendered her artless conversation charming and entertaining.

To

To his Lordship's great joy she was evidently entertained by the glowing picture of London, he contrived to mix in his conversation; but he could not, with all his art, extort one wish from her to see or be seen there.

The 'Squire took his leave at a late hour, and the company separated, apparently delighted with each other.

CHAP. IV.

AT breakfast, the three persons, bent on conquest, met with all possible advantage; Lady Margaret gave a formal invitation to all present to spend that day week at Castle Howel; Lord Claverton having found *prodigious benefit* from the *air*, no longer talked of a *sudden removal*.

Mr. Macsheat and the Lieutenant attended Lady Margaret on horseback, and were introduced to the Earl of Castle Howel; when her Ladyship, with unusual volubility, dis-canted on the present happiness of the Code Gwyn family, explained the reasons she chose to assign for her visit there, protested they were the best creatures in the world, and that she was particularly indebted to the politeness of the two gentlemen who escorted her home.

The Earl bowed to each: Lady Margaret lamented living so long in the neighbourhood without having cultivated such agreeable society; she had engaged them to spend a day at Castle Howel.

The Earl bowed again, and Lady Margaret having opened her scheme, was silent, considering on the next step towards completing her conquest over the irresistible Macsheat, for so he now appeared to her warm imagination.

Mr.

Mr. Macsheat, who was always upon the watch for any thing that might be eventually advantageous, attempted to enter into conversation; but a grave bow, or a single monosyllable, was all he could gain from the Earl, and perceiving his Lordship was totally indifferent to whatever subject was started, and that Lady Margaret looked restless and dissatisfied, while the Lieutenant was attentively examining some fine charts of the sea coast, which hung over the chimney, he arose, and casting a languishing look at her Ladyship, and most profoundly bowing to the Earl, asked the Lieutenant if he would go.

The sailor was on his hobby-horse, he loved his profession, and every thing appertaining to it interested him. The Earl was not so abstracted but he could see the young man was uncommonly pleased; he patronized the artist who published the charts, and gratified at so unequivocal a mark of approbation, from one who must be a professional judge of their merit, invited him to his dress-

ing-room, where he had another set, by the same hand.

Here was a golden opportunity, which Macsheat did not suffer to escape. The windows overlooked a rich prospect of land, wood and water; ease and affluence seemed the natural inhabitants of this magnificent castle; the ornaments and furniture were superb, there was even an air of contented grandeur in the livery of the servants; and Lady Margaret, the Medea who had the clue to this golden fleece: could a lover, a poor lover, and a scotch lover! be less than eloquent? What Mr. Macsheat said, or what he did, we leave our readers to imagine from their own feelings.

The Earl of Castle Howel was, at the period this history commences, in his fiftieth year; he had, in his youth, disoblige his father, by marrying the beautiful daughter of an obscure Attorney, in London, who he accidentally saw in the street, and following home, became so enamoured of her, that he considered

considered all other blessings of life as mere trifles in comparison of the possession of her. It however frequently happens that the wisest of frail mortals are so little able to decide on the right road to happiness, that they take the exact opposite ; of this the Honorable Mr. Howel was an instance : He offended his father, and all his noble relations, by marrying Miss Capus, of Spital-Fields, and after Miss Capus had been one month looked up to as the Honorable Mrs. Howel, he discovered he had mortally offended her, by raising her out of the reach of a smart young man, who officiated as clerk to her father, and who had indeed entirely forestalled Mr. Howel in the possession of his fair bride's person and affection.

The reader will expect the consequences : Mr. Howel was dependent on a stern obstinate father ; Miss Capus would not be the Honorable Mrs. Howel for nothing ; if she might not have the splendour of an Earl's daughter,

daughter, she might as well have staid in Spital-Fields, with her father's clerk.

Too charming to be without admiration, and too vain to be displeased at exciting it, her acquaintance became very general, and very suspected; for some little time Mrs. Howel could dress and shew with the most expensive, without any visible fund to support her fine taste: Mr. Howel was the first who chose to make enquiries into so strange a matter, he was followed by the whole beau monde; these indeed were better and sooner informed, but a very little time returned the fair bride to Spital-Fields, and her father's clerk. Mr. Howel had proofs enough of her ill conduct to obtain a divorce, but he had taken a disgust to the sex, and resolved never to marry again, and as he became indolent and careless in the matter, it dropped of course.

A few years, however, rendered the legal divorce of importance; his two elder brothers

thers died, the honors and estates of Castle Howel were entailed on the male heir, the next in succession after Mr. Howel was a person, who had rendered himself particularly obnoxious to the family, and it was a very serious matter with the old Earl and two maiden sisters, Lady Frances, and Lady Gertrude Howel, to disappoint his expectations.

The Earl of Castle Howel's express found his son in a remote corner of Switzerland, studying Botany. He received the news with great philosophy, and returned to England by easy stages, within two months after he was expected.

The first business that engrossed the old Earl, and his two sisters, was that of settling the divorce, and fixing on a proper person to bring an heir into the family.

His son was, on his part, no less engaged in planning and laying out a piece of ground for botanical experiments.

The divorce could not be obtained ; the time had elapsed ; one witness was dead, another not to be found, and the lady-wife, by experience had become cautious ; the Earl was grieved, the two noble spinsters outrageous, and Lord Howel pursued his botanical experiments.

Lord Howel succeeded his father in title and estate, but his aunts, who were rich, retired to an estate they had in the North of England ; the Earl died intestate and insolvent ; Lady Margaret, his only surviving daughter, received a cold invitation to accompany her aunts to the North, but she had sense enough to observe, that while her father, who played high, kept race horses, and was at the head of every fashionable expence, out-lived his income, her aunts were making the very *most* of his brotherly affection ; from them she imbibed a laudable regard to the grand movement of all our actions, *self interest*, and wisely resolved to continue with a brother, whose situation was a security against his marrying,
and

and abstracted turn of mind left her sovereign mistress of his house; she therefore declined, under the plea of sisterly regard, her aunts invitation; the force of that plea they perfectly comprehended, and gave her prudence due credit.

The ladies departed on civil terms with their nephew and niece, having extorted a promise from the former, that as soon as it was possible to get legally rid of his wife, he would marry some young woman, and make them all happy in the long desired addition to the family; on their part engaging his male heir should be theirs also.

Lord Castle Howel had many antediluvian notions of honor about him; he inherited Castle Howel estate entail, no debt of his father's was binding on him, but he considered he had long lived with comfort to himself on 200l. per annum, he was now in the receipt of 20000l. the debts of the Earl, including those of honor, amounted to sixty thousand; these

these debts he considered as part of his inheritance, and appropriated one-third of his income to pay off principal and interest, which reduced his rent-roll to 14000. The apathy of his disposition was not removed by excess of fortune, but innate honesty of heart predominated so far, as to bring him to his closet once a week, for the first year, to arrange his expences according to his ideas of filial honor, and having so arranged them, he resigned the command of his family to his sister, taking her vouchers, for the general disbursements, while he amused himself with botanical and philosophical experiments, and patronizing genius wherever he met it.

Mondays, during the season, the huntsmen, with a fine pack of dogs, were in the field, and usually collected a large company of plain country 'squires, for whose entertainment there was a public dinner; but as *their* general conversation neither suited Lord Castle Howel, nor Lord Castle Howel *theirs*; and as Lady Margaret was neither handsome nor rich, few visitors,

visitors, except on hunting days, troubled Castle Howel.

Lady Margaret, though doomed nine months of the year to this insipid vegetation, passed the other three more to her taste; they had a house in Grosvenor-Street, and her Ladyship was among the leaders of the high ton, she was constantly in the circle, had a box at the opera, patronized the fashionable favourites of either theatre, was a subscriber to all the music meetings, had her Sunday concerts and assemblies; in short, as the old song says, "Wherever a fiddle was heard she was there," but year after year elapsing with equal sameness, without one offer of marriage, was a terrible drawback on her enjoyments; she had long persuaded herself it was want of fortune that deprived her of the attentions she saw paid to older ladies than herself, and as long had been endeavouring to remedy the evil.

The

The Earl's family were thus situated, when a certain honest peculiarity of manners, and a blunt freedom of address, added to an uncommon good-humoured set of features, interested his Lordship in favor of Lieutenant Meredith, and gave Doctor Macsheat an opportunity to breathe his passion at the feet of Lady Margaret.

Dinner was announced before either of the *tête-à-tête* parties were up, and before the visitors made their bow, Lord Castle Howel joined Lady Margaret's invitation to be better acquainted.

CHAP. V.

MEANWHILE the hours passed at Code Gwyn with little satisfaction to Lord Claverton, his affairs went on in rather a retrograde

trograde motion, though he had done so much violence to his polite nature, as to sacrifice two whole hours to the back-gammon table with Sir Arthur, had listened to a favorite rhapsody from Clelia, by Miss Meredith, admired the œconomy of her sister, and read three long letters from Lucretia to Amantus: Ellen and her maid Winifred, insensible to both cause and effect of such great humiliation, had strolled away to the parsonage, and it was dark before she returned; her absence, when he found she did not appear at the dinner table, took away the little appetite he had, and his chagrin got the better of even his consummate art; he asked, with feigned indifference, if Miss Ellen had accompanied Lady Margaret?

“Oh!” replied the old Baronet, “this is too fine a day for Ellen to be at home, she will return as blooming as a rose: Have you seen her?” addressing Mr. Meredith. “No,” answered he, “but I dare say Percival has; I suppose they are together.”

Lord

Lord Claverton coloured, and removed from table really unwell; the facility with which he had planned to seduce the young beauty was no more; not that a single scruple as to the means necessary to be employed troubled him; no, it was his observations on Ellen herself, and a rising jealousy of the tall awkward youth, whom one moment he despised, and the next feared, that disturbed him.

A long series of ill health, the consequences of early irregularities and a hot climate, entirely pervaded the nervous system of Lord Claverton, the least opposition to his passions both irritated and weakened him, he was on the present occasion therefore, in a very unenviable state; he retired to his chamber, and was joined by Doctor Macsheat, so much worse, that *he* talked of medicine, but was interrupted by his Lordship's impatient inquiry of, "who was below?"

"In

"In troth," replied the Doctor, "my Lord, I was so alarmed at the account I heard —"

Lord Claverton turned pale, "Account! what has happened, is Ellen returned?"

Had his Lordship sent for Dr. Macsheat on purpose to make him the full confidant of what passed in his mind; had he taken the utmost pains to elucidate every present sensation, and minutely explained every future intention, the wary Doctor could not have been let more fully into his patron's secrets, than by the voice and manner which accompanied the simple interrogation. —

"Is Ellen yet returned?"

Dr. Macsheat immediately seated himself, and improving on this unguarded lapse, was in five minutes invested with as much authority, as prime agent to Lord Claverton, as he himself chose to accept; that is to say, Lord Claverton did not propose, nor did Dr. Macsheat

Macshean hint at the seduction of the girl; each party understood the other too well, to be so much in either's power; but the friendship of his Lordship to the Meredith family, and his particular liking of the pretty Ellen, on account of her *innocence* and *vivacity*, might certainly inspire a wish to serve and a blameless desire of knowing every thing that concerned *her*, and the Doctor might engage to gratify such his patron's wish and desire, without the least reflection on his own *moral* character.

Lord Claverton and his friend had yet the tea cups before them, when Ellen's voice warbling a welch air, as she passed the gallery, gave the welcome information of her return, and as the Peer's spirits were immediately above par, he proposed joining the family.

'Squire Morgan, whose business at Code Gwyn became every day more frequent, was in the parlour, and Lieutenant Meredith having

ing amused his father, and gratified his mother, with an account of Lord Castle Howel's particular goodness to *him* ; the instant Lord Claverton entered, the 'Squire took occasion to congratulate the family on the acquisition of *two* such noble friends as the Earl, and (bowing very low) Lord Claverton.

As Ellen undesignedly drew her chair between her grandfather and the Peer, he was in high good humour, and appeared to listen so attentively to the long stories Sir Arthur loved to tell, she, for the first time looked at him with attention; the pale and languid, though handsome countenance of a Lord, who seemed to like her dear grandfather, and who, the 'Squire most humbly insinuated, might essentially serve her uncle, the Lieutenant, interested her; after a stedfast observance, which, though he affected to be wholly engrossed by the long story, did not escape his Lordship, she pleased and surprised him by an address, in which softness and sympathy were blended.

“How

"How do you find yourself this evening, my Lord? Griffiths said you were worse."

In spite of all his art the blood mounted to his cheek; the Doctor's looks encountered his Patron's, and both concluded matters were en train.

'Squire Morgan, without seeming to dare to raise his eyes to Lord Claverton, or to attend to any thing but the long story, which he had heard, at least, one hundred times before, had *his* observations too, but he concealed them in a low bow, and took his leave.

Winifred Griffiths was an ill made girl, not yet eighteen, with black hair, eyes, and eyebrows, short nose, wide mouth, strong white teeth, high cheek bones, and a very fresh colour, spoke very bad English, and worse Welch: Joseph Wilks, however, by his Lord's commands, fell desperately in love with Winifred's beauty, presented her with

two

two handsome silk handkerchiefs, and a pair of silver buckles, and pressed very hard for a promise of marriage.

“Why, as Cot shall save me, Mr. Joseph, your gifts are very good, and you are a very well behaved footman, but my uncle Griffiths will not give me a farthing of fortune if I don’t ask his consent.”

“Fortune! what did his charmer think he valued fortune? No; Joe Wilks would have Winifred Griffiths, if Winifred Griffiths would have Joe Wilks, in spite of her old cross uncle, or his fortune.”

“Ay, Cot knows, cross indeed: But then Miss Ellen; oh, she would not leave Miss Ellen, no, not for all Code Gwyn was worth, and, to be sure, it was the finest, the best, and greatest place in all the world!”

This declaration led to a secret Mr. Joseph would tell his fair Winifred, under the *seal* of
secrecy,

secrecy, which was, that as Lord Claverton was as much in love with her mistress, as he was with herself, she might safely promise to marry him, without leaving Miss Ellen.

This point being settled, Winifred very readily folded up the handkerchiefs, put the silver buckles in her shoes, and proudly anticipating the day when Ellen Meredith should be Lady Claverton, promised to marry his footman; the agreement being signed and sealed in the usual way such agreements are commonly signed and sealed between footmen and waiting maids, the parties separated; Winifred to shew her cists and boast of her conquest, to the rest of the maids, keeping, however, her promise of *secrecy* in regard to her mistress; and Joseph to report to his Lord the progress of his passion.

The day fixed on for the visit to Castle Howel arrived, Ellen begged to stay at home with Sir Arthur, and Lord Claverton was immediately too much indisposed to attend;

Lady Meredith could not press his Lordship, but her pride as well as that of her daughter's was too much gratified by the admiration Ellen always excited, to dispense with her; and Lord Claverton, to his great mortification, had another day to pass, either in his chamber, or at the back-gammon table, as, though he might be very suddenly and dangerously taken *indisposed*, he was too cautious to raise suspicion in the family by a too sudden *recovery*.

Lady Meredith dressed Ellen herself, Miss Catherine adjusted her fine hair, and, indeed, by the uncommon attention of all the ladies, one would be led to believe they had a presentiment of the consequence of that day's visit, to Castle Howel.

Doctor Macsheat was also particularly attentive to *his* dress, and the ladies being ready, he handed them, with great ceremony, to the coach, into which, (as he declined riding on horseback in respect to the dressing

of his very thin, and, in many parts, grey hairs) he also stepped himself.

Edward Griffiths, who always attended Lady Meredith, and two other grey headed servants, followed the old coach, in its sure though slow progress.

As they entered the fine Park, and approached the Castle, by roads kept in the nicest order, Ellen, whose longest journey had been to Code Gwyn church, was charmed with scenes so new; she had never once conceived there was in the world any thing superior to Code Gwyn, where, though the Parks, and all the walks and grounds, spoke too plainly the gradual decay both of the health and property of the venerable owner, there yet remained a superiority and grandeur, so much out of all comparison above what she had seen at the house of 'Squire Morgan, Mr. James, the Apothecary, or any of the opulent farmers in the neighbourhood, that she had not entertained a doubt but Code Gwyn

Gwyn was the finest feat, and Sir Arthur the first gentleman in the world, not excepting Lord Claverton, of whose importance she had, within the last twenty-four hours, by the help of Dr. Macsheat and Winifred Griffith, formed a very high opinion.

Lady Meredith, who had, in her youth, been the companion and friend of the Ladies, Gertrude and Frances Howel, while they resided at the Castle, was revolving as the carriage rumbled slowly on, over the pleasant hours of juvenile hilarity: Miss Catherine could recollect many fine descriptions of Cassandra and Clelia, when the Oroondates and Alexanders had sighed under such shades as those they were passing: Miss Agnes lamented the pasture at Code Gwyn was much inferior to that at Castle Howel: Mary was studying fine sentences to adorn a descriptive letter to her friend, Miss Peggy Jones: and Doctor Macsheat — but it is impossible to delineate the variety of thoughts that occupied his ideas; a marriage into the Earl's

E 2

family

family had so many glittering appendages—one would be first, another would be first, and all would be first—What, however, was rather extraordinary, the fair lady who was the grand mover of all, was not thought of 'till the coach stopped, and he saw her significant smile from the bow window of the drawing-room, then indeed the Doctor saw Lady Margaret, and though he had handed the pretty Agnes into the carriage, and pressed her hand with great gallantry, he now declined any civilities to the younger part of the family, and transferred all his care to Lady Meredith.

Mr. Meredith and the Lieutenant, who rode on horseback, were already with the Earl.

The grand stair-case, the marble hall, gilded ornaments, fine figures, and rich vases, which filled a number of niches as they passed, astonished Ellen, she had not eyes enough to look round, and the rest of the party were introduced

roduced and seated, while she stood at the door, afraid either to advance or retreat, the Earl himself was the first to take notice of the young visitor.

Lord Castle Howel was an enthusiastic admirer of the beauties of nature, his heart had paid homage to one of the finest works of the creation, uncultivated by education and unblest by talent; from her he had retreated with disgust, and the vegetable world next attracted his attention: His misfortune, with respect to his wife, was a continual guard on his passions, his eyes were in subjection to his situation; and though the sublime and beautiful of all descriptions attracted him, he chose to live secluded from temptation, and it was seldom he allowed himself to contemplate the face of a beautiful woman; but one now presented itself, from which he apprehended no danger, where all the charms of modesty and innocence were blended with a something more than beauty.

Impelled by admiration he hastily advanced towards Ellen, took her hand, and led her blushing to Lady Margaret.

“Whose little angel is this?” said he, “How came you not to introduce her?”

Lady Margaret had been too long a sedulous observer of her brother, to mistake any of his actions, she directly saw Ellen would be a favorite, and from that moment she was a little divinity.

Dinner was served with all possible magnificence, and cards introduced but not attended to: Lady Margaret, with all that marked attention which fine-bred women *can* pay, to those on whom they condescend to form designs, won on the unsuspecting heart of Lady Meredith: She presented Miss Meredith with several old Romances out of the library; chatted with Agnes on the merit of domestic economy; and presented Mary with a handsome ebony ink stand, filled with crow pens

pens and french paper : Mr. Meredith admired a fine pointer, Lady Margaret begged it of the Earl for him — In short, she was every thing to every body.

Doctor Macsheat, who hitherto considered only the immediate advantage of his union with Lady Margaret, could not but be pleased with a woman, whose internal policy so exactly corresponded with his own, and whose easy manners and address, at her brother's table, gave his Scotch family pride a pleasing earnest of what she would be at her own, when his visionary castles should be realized, and, by her interest, he should be an established Physician, in the Metropolis, which was the goal of his ambition.

In the mean while Ellen and the Earl were seated on a sofa, at a distance from the rest of the company, the latter too much engaged with his new acquaintance, to attend the manœuvres of his sister.

His heart (torpid as his early disappointment and disgust had rendered it) insensibly warmed to a being, on whose countenance the finger of nature legibly displayed every amiable trait of the human mind — the face of Ellen was a wonder, yet her beauty ceased to attract where her natural bashfulness gave way to frankness and vivacity.

The result of the favorable sentiments she thus artlessly inspired, was an inquiry into her education, and it is difficult to say, whether Lord Castle Howel most regretted her deficiencies in modern accomplishments, or admired her native graces without them; he was far from fatigued when supper put an end to the tête-à-tête, and bid Ellen good night with paternal complacency.

CHAP. VII.

LADY Meredith was amused while undressing, by Ellen's rapturous praises of Lord Castle Howel, he was, she declared, almost as handsome as her grandfather, and quite different from Lord Claverton.

"He is so sweet tempered, Gradmamma, so like my uncle Edmund; and, do you know, he says so many sweet things."

"He is very good, but what does he say?"

"That my uncle Lewes was born to be an Admiral, and that you must have been very handsome when you was young; and indeed I told him, so you are now; and he

said—now what do you think he said? He said, that *I* was like you, but many people have told me that, and when I have looked in the glass, I do think I am.”

“Then, my dear, by that rule, you think yourself handsome?”

“Why, yes, Grandmamma, I *do* think my face is handsomer than many people’s, there’s Winifred’s, you know, she has very pretty black eyes, and more colour in her cheek, and yet I think I like my own face best; but now, Grandmamma, only tell me what you think of Percival Evelyn’s face, is not his a pretty one?”

“Prettier than your own, Ellen?”

“Oh, yes, a vast deal; his eyes are prettier than Winifred’s, or any body’s, except my Grandpapa’s; and, though he is pale, what a sweet colour he has sometimes; why did he not come with us? I dare say Lord Castle Howel would have liked him very well,”

"Go to sleep, child, and dream of Lord Castle Howel."

"No, I don't think I shall dream of *him*, but I dare say I shall of Percival."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed, I am always sure to dream of him; and, do you know, Grandmamma, though I am ashamed when he tells me so, he dreams of me too; he told me this morning he dreamed last night that he saw me carried over towers, and high buildings, he was afraid of my falling, and yet he could not get at me, and he said he cried so his pillow was wet: Wasn't it very shocking?"

"Oh, my dear, you must not mind dreams."

"No, I don't mind them, only I thought of Percival, when I saw the top of the Castle this morning."

While Ellen was thus pourtraying her feelings to her venerable parent, Lord Castle Howel was traversing his apartment, and ruminating on the lovely child, whose mind and person promised so much perfection: He was a man of nice honor and great generosity, I have no children, said he, I will adopt her, educate, and bring her into life; she will amuse my heavy hours, and adorn my festive ones; but the world!—the world!——Aye, well, if the censure of the world forbids me to indulge myself in her society, I will educate her *for* the world: and firmly resolving so to do, he went to rest, satisfied with his own intentions towards Ellen and all God's creation.

The morning shewed Lord Castle Howel his fair visitant by day light, for although the hour of dining at Castle Howel and London differed by at least two hours, yet lights must be introduced with the dinner. Ellen was still Ellen, the morning being frosty, she who hailed the rising sun at home, had now been rambling

rambling out, long before Lady Margaret left her room.

Lord Castle Howel and his young friend were again seated on the sofa, the tête-à-tête of the preceding night was renewed with increased approbation on both sides, and before the Meredith family took leave, the Earl asked Lady Meredith, half joking, if she would give him her grand-daughter, which she, in the same good-humour, promised.

From this period Doctor Macsheat became a regular, though private, visitor, at Castle Howel.

Joseph apprised his Lord of the return of the carriage, who flew with avidity to the hall door to receive Ellen.

Ready for the same service, but too modest to keep his station, when his Lordship appeared, stood Percival Evelyn; the proud
Peer

Peer attempted to look him into contempt, it was, however, but an attempt; for Percival Evelyn, under his rustic bashfulness, had fine natural sense, and great personal courage, and although, by his own humility, Lord Claverton got so far the advantage of him as to receive Ellen from the coach, he resolutely advanced to welcome her home; she extended her hand to him with an air of the most familiar friendship, asked a number of questions, which her vivacity did not give him time to answer, and entirely regardless of Lord Claverton's ill health, of which he complained, or of the intense cold, which she seemed not to feel, stood chatting away 'till reproved by Lady Meredith, when she suffered herself to be led in by the smiling though inwardly enraged Lord Claverton.

Mr. Meredith, who did not sleep at Castle Howel, was indisposed; a disappointment of the heart in the early part of his life, had extremely injured his health; he was subject to nervous fevers, and bilious complaints, which

often confined him, and filled his family with apprehensions for his life : He usually left the rectory on the first symptoms of an attack, but Lord Claverton's stay rendered Code Gwyn less desirable, and less convenient than his own house, and Percival was now come to fetch Miss Meredith, who, with all her romance, was his favorite sister.

The conversation of the preceding night dwelt on Lady Meredith's mind ; Percival Evelyn, she, for the first time discovered, was too much in Ellen's thoughts ; *his* expectations were moderate indeed ! Ellen's no less so ; together they must be wretched, separate each might be fortunate : These reflections occurred to Lady Meredith, during her ride home, and the impropriety of suffering two amiable young people, partial to each other, to be in the same house, with their feelings engrossed by the same object, also occurred, while Ellen pleaded, with great eloquence both of speech and look, the necessity of somebody's accompanying her aunt, in the
care

care of her dear uncle; but a grave negative, from Lady Meredith, silenced and disconcerted her.

The next morning Lady Meredith went to visit her son alone; this was the second real sorrow Ellen had ever felt, and as it was an unusual deprivation of indulgence without a consciousness of offence, that sorrow was blended with some little resentment.

Winifred happened to be also in great trouble; she had unfortunately burnt a sheet of paper, wrote all over by Amanthis to Lucretia, giving a full and particular account of the visit to Castle Howel; and, in running out of the way of Mary, who was a little of the vixen, struck Sir Arthur's gouty foot in such a manner, as to excite anger in the bosom of meekness itself. Lady Meredith recommended it to Mrs. Griffiths to punish her for her carelessness, and forbid her to appear in her sight. Winifred's sorrow was always boisterous, and, her disgrace happening while Mr. Joseph

Joseph was present, was such an aggravation, that the servants'-hall echoed with her injuries. Ellen went hastily to enquire what could occasion such violent exclamations of grief.

Winifred no sooner beheld her young mistress with tears in *her* eyes, than all her own cares vanished.

“As Cot shall pless me, Miss Ellen, you have been crying your eyes out, vat the tivil is the matter fith my lady?”

Ellen was sure she did not know, but she was very cross.

Winifred believed the tivil himself had got his cloven foot among them.

Mistress and maid being united in one cause, were proceeding to Ellen's room, to unbosom, when, in the gallery, they were met by Lord Claverton, who very anxiously enquired of Mr. Meredith's health.

This

This was the right key.

Ellen immediately entered into a history of his disorder, and lamented her grandmamma would not let her go to him.

Lady Meredith's conduct did not, it will be presumed, appear so very unreasonable to his Lordship; but it was not his business to dispute the point, he contented himself with soothing her vexation, and speaking well of the objects of her warmest affections, even Evelyn came in for some share in his compliments, and so, by degrees, lessened her agitation, and prevailed on her to walk up and down the gallery with him 'till she had recovered her spirits and temper.

When a man once takes it into his head, he will be very fond of a woman; or, when a woman feels the same disposition towards a man, it is amazing with what ingenuity they spin out every little thread of event 'till it forms a web of happiness or misery.

Lord

Lord Claverton considered Lady Meredith's ill humour as a most fortunate circumstance, for it procured him the company of Ellen two whole hours after she had ceased to remember her vexation, without forgetting the kindness of his consolation.

CHAP. VIII.

LADY Meredith having found her son in no immediate danger, made her visit short, and returned, eager to impart to Sir Arthur her observations on Ellen's conversation with her, at Castle Howel: He agreed with her, that a permanent attachment to Percival, who was wholly dependent on their son, and (except as his eleve) totally unknown to

to them, would ruin their child, without bettering him, they were, therefore, designing proper means of separating them, when Lady Margaret Howel was announced.

In the same breath that she asked for the sweet Ellen, she congratulated Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith on their good fortune, and proceeded, with an apparent candid liberality, to inform them, her brother had taken an uncommon liking to the charming child, that he thought she promised to be one of the greatest beauties of the age, that he considered her want of education as a serious misfortune, which he would be happy to redress, by instantly sending her to Bath, at his own expence, and give her every advantage which the first instructions could bestow.

Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith looked at each other, they thought of the benefit their darling would derive from this generous offer of Lord Castle Howel, and their bosoms swelled with gratitude; but they recollected they

they must part with her, and their eyes filled with tears.

Dr. Macshead entered, and neither one sensation nor the other was observed; Lady Margaret said, she would leave the Baronet and his Lady to consider of the business, and left the room with the Doctor.

After a short silence,

“What good will a fine education do her?” said Sir Arthur, “without we could give her a suitable fortune?”

“Very true;” answered Lady Meredith, “but she is so charming, that—and beside, Sir Arthur, we have so little in our power; I am thinking, in depriving her of so generous an offer, we really shall be guilty of an act of injustice; what can we do for her?”

Sir Arthur sighed. “What shall I do for a companion, when I am laid up with the gout?”

"And who will read and prattle away the long evenings with me?" said Lady Meredith. "But these regrets are selfish, we must *conquer them*, the dear child may make friends."

"*May*," answered Sir Arthur, "she *will*; her face is a recommendation of her heart from God himself, she will be in his protection, let her go."

This conversation had long and frequent interruptions from the feelings of Sir Arthur and his Lady, the determination was painful in the extreme, but as they were both convinced it was right, Lady Meredith followed Lady Margaret, and thankfully acquainted her with their acceptance of the Earl's generous offer.

Ellen was now summoned; she was still with Lord Claverton and her favorite Winifred.

"As

"As Cot shall save me," cried Winifred, "my Lady has learnt to bear malicious, I am fæart to co down."

Ellen, without speaking, obeyed the summons, her little heart again swelling with resentment; but when informed of the change that was soon to take place in her situation, that she was to leave her family, to be moved from the lov'd spot, where, 'till New Year's eve, she had not known a sad moment, all regret for her late disappointment vanished; she looked at her venerable parents, when told she was to leave them; bursting into a flood of anguish, she flew to the bosom of Sir Arthur, her arms round his neck, his involuntarily clasping her.

"My dear grandpapa, will you then part with your Ellen?"

The affecting question, followed by sobs and dumb expressions of grief, overcame Sir Arthur.

Lady

Lady Meredith, in whose placid mind meekness and fortitude were blended, led her to her chamber, and there explained to her the generous motive that dictated an offer of such advantage, but in vain was the good lady eloquent on every advantage that would result from the offered protection of Lord Castle Howel.

To be accomplished, elegant, and well informed, was fine ; but to stay at Code Gwyn with Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith, to be instructed by her uncle and aunt, and share in the amusements of Percival Evelyn, was a thousand times finer.

Two hours passed in adducing solid reasons, on the part of Lady Meredith, why the Earl's offer should be accepted, and in hearing the innocent and no less feasible ones of Ellen, why it should be rejected : But her's was the voice of uninformed simplicity, warm in its natural attachments, and totally unacquainted with the world : Lady Meredith

was

was herself a child in experience, yet she could argue as well on a point where the obvious interest of Ellen was concerned, as the best counsel in the world.

Strongly impressed with the idea, that a secret attachment was taking root in her heart to young Evelyn, the more she reflected the more earnest she was to remove her from so dangerous an attraction; and as all opposition to her wish was perfectly new to the child of her heart, she at length prevailed; Ellen consented to return to Castle Howel, with Lady Margaret, and thankfully accept the Earl's noble and disinterested offer.

By the time this conference was ended, the purport of Lady Margaret's visit was spread over the house. Winifred, notwithstanding Lady Meredith's commands not to appear in her sight, was seated on the ground at the door of the chamber, and it no sooner opened, than she set up a cry, and fell down at Lady Meredith's feet in strong hysterics.

Ellen, fondly attached to the humble friend of her youth, bathed her face with her tears, and was kneeling by her, when Lord Claverton, alarmed at the extraordinary noise, appeared in the gallery, and with an exclamation of surprise, asked the cause of Winifred's sorrow. The answer he received was as great a blow to him as it had been to Winifred, and as unexpected too; he descended with hasty and perturbed steps to the parlour, where Lady Margaret sat, with undisturbed countenance, apparently hearing the fond regrets of the old Baronet, but really engrossed by the tender looks of Doctor Macsheat.

Lord Claverton, too much interested to be on his guard, immediately asked the cause of a commotion that was visible in the countenance of every inhabitant of Code Gwyn, Doctor Macsheat and Joseph Wilks only excepted.

Lady Meredith and her weeping child entered before he was answered, the latter with
her

her straw bonnet tied over her flowing hair, ready to attend Lady Margaret, but her swollen eyes and dejected looks were to Lord Claverton a welcome proof of her reluctance.

The fond grandmother entreated Lady Margaret to allow for the caprice, which, in youth, is often the result of unlimited indulgence: Lady Margaret embraced and encouraged the fair novice, and promising she should return to Code Gwyn in two days, took her in her carriage, which was followed by the tears and vociferous exclamations of poor Winifred. Her Ladyship, at her brother's request, invited the Lieutenant to accompany his niece, but as his guest, Lord Claverton, who professed an uncommon friendship for him, complained of sudden indisposition, he politely excused himself.

The feelings of his Lordship at this moment were rather troublesome: What could induce Lord Castle Howel to take a young girl under his protection but beauty? What

was her want of accomplishments to a man, who did not mean her attainments should be sacrificed to his pleasures? Judging from himself, he had no doubt but the Earl meant to get possession of the young beauty for his own private amusement; but, as *he* was some years younger than Lord Castle Howel, and, as he rightly presumed, as superior in the art of intrigue as in person, the scheme of sending her to a school at Bath, which he found was proposed, did not, on recollection, appear so terrible. Ellen, in the bosom of her family, under the affectionate eye of Lady Meredith, and the piercing one of her son, in the habit of strolling about with Percival Evelyn, or listening to the heroic reading of Miss Meredith, was certainly a more difficult conquest, than Ellen at a public boarding school.

There were governesses, and *some* he *knew*, who were assailable; the medical quality of the Bath waters was a pretence for his openly going there; the Code Gwyn family could

could not suspect his motive for visiting a young lady, with whom his acquaintance commenced under their own roof, besides he might very naturally invite the Lieutenant to accompany him. These thoughts succeeded each other in rapid progression, while Sir Arthur's family were pursuing Lady Margaret's carriage 'till it was no longer visible.

Lord Claverton was indisposed—Sir Arthur's gout threatened him—the ladies had headaches—and the Doctor and Lieutenant being left to themselves, the latter proposed to walk to the Rectory to visit the Parson.

They found Mr. Meredith asleep, Percival by his bed-side, and Miss Meredith reading in the study; rest and quiet being the usual specific in Mr. Meredith's disorder, after just looking at the sick man, tea was ordered and Percival summoned to join them.

The extraordinary whim, as Doctor Macshean chose to call it, of Lord Castle Howel, had been discussed over and over, between him and the Lieutenant, and it recommenced at tea.

Miss Meredith, for her part, wished there was not a black design at the bottom, to spirit her niece away, and so keep her out of the knowledge of her friends, 'till some gallant youth atchieved wonders in effecting her release; for, as to her education, she solemnly assured the Doctor, *that* was perfectly compleat; she had herself heard her read through seven quarto volumes of Cassandra, the folios of Clelia, and Princess of Cleeves, and few people, she would say, could give more force to the greatness of Oroondate's soul, or more grace to the tenderness of Cassandra's, than Ellen Meredith.

Young Evelyn, too much used to Miss Meredith's rhapsodies to attend to her conversation, was looking over an old newspaper,

per, and sipping his tea, in a kind of absent listlessness, when the sound of a name most familiar and dear to his heart, and a confused recollection of the conversation, brought a crimson glow into his face, which retreated in one moment, and left it pale as ashes; his eyes, naturally full, swelled in their sockets; his eye-brows were distended, and every sense was converted to ear, when Miss Meredith proceeded in her eulogium on the finished education of her niece, her surmises of the causes of sending her away, her prognostics of the consequences, her dislike of a modern education, and her regret at parting with Ellen; the Lieutenant laughed at her romantic phrases and odd notions; the Doctor, who made it a rule to be all things to all men, though he spoke not, looked a coincidence with Miss Meredith, when suddenly Percival Evelyn fell back in his chair.

Miss Meredith shrieked, the maids, one of whom was old enough to be a grandmother, rushed in, and set up a lamentation in their

own harmonious language, which very much resembled the Hibernian howl. Mr. Meredith waked out of the first natural repose since his indisposition, rang his bell, no regard was paid to it, he with great difficulty reached his morning gown and got to the door, but could distinguish nothing but a confusion of sounds, now moderated by the Doctor, now increased by the women, and feeling himself weak was returning to his bed, there to wait an explanation, 'till some part of the family were at leisure to give it him, when a yell reached his ear, that quickly banished all attention to his own weakness; it was Martha, his old maid, who screamed, "Percival is dead." There was now no apparent want of health in Mr. Meredith, he rushed down and found his young eleve without any signs of life, a cold dew on his forehead, and Doctor Macsheat in the act of letting him blood; Miss Meredith, in terror at the accident, appealed to her brother, without wondering at his presence, whether he should or should not be bled.

Mr.

Mr. Meredith looked on the palid face with speechless agony and astonishment; the incision was made but no blood followed the lancet; Doctor Macsheatn looked very serious; Mr. Meredith in sad, but solemn composure, ordered the door and windows to be opened, and, no longer weak, raised the body in his arms, loosened his collar, and directed Martha to bring a tub of warm water; she obeyed, but in her hurry a trifling mistake occurred; as they were brewing, she substituted warm wort for water, but by the time she returned, the young man had opened his eyes, he bled freely, and the colour of life re-animated his face.

It was in vain he was urged to assign a cause for this sudden attack, in vain he was pressed to describe his present feelings; his eyes were fixed, and, to the surprise of every body, he continued silent; a tear strayed involuntary from either eye, they dropped on the hand of Mr. Meredith, and increased his

F 5 astonishment.

astonishment. Miss Meredith now recollected her brother's situation.

"Good God! brother," she exclaimed, "why did you come down? You will get your death."

Percival heard this and recovered his speech; lamented having exposed his friend to such hazard, intreated him to return to his chamber, and begged with such earnest sadness that he might accompany him, that they retired together, attended by Martha, who went to put her master to bed, leaving the Lieutenant, Doctor Macshead, and Miss Meredith, to talk over and wonder at the strange event, 'till the moon arose, when the Doctor and Lieutenant walked home.

CHAP. IX.

THE Earl, delighted with Ellen's simplicity, and that frankness of heart, which mingled expressions of tender regret for the friends she was so soon to leave, with gratitude to him for the cause; and finding his attention much more pleasantly attracted by the beauty of a human than a field flower, undertook himself to begin the formation of a mind so open and naturally ductile.

Lady Margaret had already sent measures and orders to Vigo-Lane, for a complete assortment of fine linen and cloaths, suitable to the age and appearance of a school girl.

The depression of Ellen's spirits was increased when shewn to her elegant apartment; she had hitherto slept in a small chamber adjoining her grandfather's, Winifred was her bed-fellow, and had, usually, some light hearted tale or other to amuse her with while undressing, when her venerable parents called out the salutations of the night.

She was now in a large room superbly hung, richly carpeted, furnished with gilt cabinets, and large mirrors, but with a loneliness of grandeur that recalled the comforts of her own little chamber, in such vivid colours, she burst into tears; the servant who attended her reported this to the Earl and his sister, the former immediately conjectured the cause, and begged Lady Margaret to invite her to take half her bed. Lady Margaret's rule, from which she never swerved, was, to be always of her brother's opinion: She called a smile into her features, said she was just thinking of the same thing, and sent her woman to fetch Ellen into her apartment.

To

To those, used to kindness and affection, every deprivation is grievous, and a heart pining under a change so wounding to sensibility, opens to every approach of the treatment it regrets: Ellen found herself soothed by this mark of attention, her tears dispersed, she went to bed, and her mind, hurried by the events of the day, being now composed, sunk to rest. But however ready her Ladyship had been to oblige her brother, she had not in this case been civil to herself; the admitting Ellen to her room was, in some degree, to admit her to her confidence; for *her* woman, who was her privy counsellor, had as many things to amuse her Lady as Winifred had for Ellen.

Doctor Macsheat had already found the secret of conveying his amorous vows, thro' Mrs. Gibson, and though he had not *now* a vast deal of gold to give her, yet, as she knew her Lady abounded, and as she saw it was very probable both Lady and gold would in time be his, she very courteously delivered the

the letters and messages he continued daily to send, and entertained her lady with a number of good qualities, with which she kindly endowed him, as well as with many pertinent remarks on his handsome person and pleasing address.

Those who have fixed their private affections, where they do not chuse publickly to avow a partiality, and those only, know the value of a confab, at bed time, with a favorite servant; Lady Margaret was resolved not to be deprived of such a treasure, and therefore, as Ellen was attached to *her* maid, she proposed sending for her, in pure kindness, which gave her great credit in the opinion of her brother, who sent a card to Code Gwyn, with a request, that Winifred might attend her young lady, and, at the same time, a light cart carried a hamper of fine old Madeira, for Sir Arthur's own drinking, from his Lordship, and a large canister of very fine tea, for Lady Meredith, from his sister.

But

But neither Madeira, tea, nor any of the advantages which promised to result from the patronage of the Earl, could dispel the regrets which filled their hearts for the absence of their favorite; with a tear on each venerable cheek, Lady Meredith went herself to the house-keeper's room, to inform Mrs. Griffiths of Lord Castle Howel's message: Mrs. Griffiths received the news of her niece's advancement, far otherways than her Lady had done that of Ellen.

For the first time in her life joy superceded respect; she hastened to consult her brother, old Griffiths, on the mutual assistance necessary for them to give their niece; and as fast as the old man could hobble from his pantry, they returned to Lady Meredith, who remained in the house-keeper's-room, with the lucid drops still distilling from either eye.

The two old servants readily consented Winifred should go to her lady; Edward brought

brought out the contents of his leather purse, and Mrs. Griffiths ransacked her drawers for the remains of her old finery. Winifred was called for, but no Winifred was to be found in or near the house; Mrs. Griffiths fumed, and Lady Meredith considering the sending for her as a proof that Ellen was not yet reconciled to her good fortune, was angry at her absence, and impatient for her return; as she was not, however, to be found, the servant was dismissed, with a grateful card from Lady Meredith, and as much of Winifred's wardrobe as Mrs. Griffiths could find, with an addition from her own hoards, that she might not disgrace either her Lady or her relations.

In half an hour after the servant was gone, home came Winifred; not as usual, singing 'till the woods echoed her wild coarse strains, nor with her natural hop, skip, and jump; but silent, slow, and heavy—she entered her aunt's room.

Mrs.

Mrs. Griffiths, who had not much of the virtue of patience in her disposition, began to rate her roughly for her absence, and demanded where she had been, in a key, that reached the hall. Winifred, out of humour and irritable, answered in equal tone.

The duet was in alt; one stormed, the other half crying, half scolding, made up in volubility what her aunt possessed in authority, and it was not 'till Lady Meredith had twice raised her mild voice, either party could be silenced.

Winifred confessed that she had been out all day, but to where, or with whom, she was stubbornly silent, and was retiring in great fullness when Lady Meredith bid her prepare to follow Ellen to Castle Howel.

All traces of ill humour immediately vanished, she laughed, sung, and capered, but suddenly stopping—

“Cot

"Cot Almighty safe us, sure my mistress is not coing to stay at that tiffish place."

"Devilsh place!" returned Mrs. Griffiths, "'tis the finest place in the thirteen counties; I was with my Lady there forty years ago."

"If it was with Cot Almighty, Cot forgive us, I had rather come back to Code Gwyn; but, to be sure, if Miss Ellen is there that is enuf."

Lady Meredith desired Winifred to be ready early next morning, and Mrs. Griffiths having ostensibly inventoried all the articles she had selected to send with her to Castle Howel, recommended it to her to devote the remaining time to getting her things in nice order.

But Winifred had other concerns to settle; she first met Joseph Wilks, by appointment, in the great barn, and gravely assured him, that all matters must end betwixt *him* and *her*,
for,

for, that her mistress would never have Lord Claverton, and as she was resolved to live and die with her, desired he would take his handkerchiefs and buckles, and get another sweet heart.

Joe was astonished; he had made love to Winifred by order of his Lord, the girl, tho' very far from handsome, was young, playful, and innocent; Joseph had somehow persuaded himself into a liking for her, and as he had a little of the coxcomb in *his* disposition, as well as his master, his vanity was humbled at her sang froid.

He attempted to persuade.

"No, no, Mr. Joseph must not think to come over her."

He threatened to hang himself.

"It matters not, Mr. Joseph."

He

He would marry the first girl who would have him—but all his rhetoric was to no purpose, 'till he swore he would leave Lord Claverton, as soon as he had saved money to stock a farm, and live at Code Gwyn: This mollified the fair damsel, who then consented to keep his presents, and suffered him to accompany her on a secret expedition to Code Gwyn village.

In the way Joseph was *too* happy not to be very fond, and as Winifred looked on her marriage as a settled thing, she was easily persuaded there should be no secrets between man and wife; his blandishments obtained what all Lady Meredith's authority, and her aunt's scolding, had failed to do, the history of her morning's excursion.

Mr. Meredith's man had been before day at Code Gwyn, on a secret message to Mrs. Winifred Griffiths, to beg she would directly come to Mr. Evelyn, who was very ill.

Mr.

Mr. Evelyn was too great a favorite not to be at all risks obeyed; but what was poor Winifred's consternation to find her friend with his eyes swelled almost out of his head, his hair disordered, his hands trembling and burning, and his whole frame speaking at once grief and disease, hardly articulate, he stammered the name of Ellen, and burst into tears.

Winifred had not slept—the night had been almost as tedious to her as it could be to him, and on account of the same object, she therefore wept too, and a few minutes conversation let her into a secret she had never suspected, and engaged her in a cause, which so accorded with her own wishes, that she swore vehemently, both in Welch and English, she would die by it.

Evelyn declared he could not live without Ellen, and his confidant said, it was not fit he should.

Evelyn

Evelyn detested all Lords—Winifred supposed they were a parcel of outlandish tivers.

“Oh, what shall I do, Winifred, if I cannot hear of my dear Ellen?”

She promised she would walk barefoot to Castle Howel but he should.

Winifred communicated this confidence to Joe, with her opinion, that “true lof was petter than cowl’d,” in which he accorded, and, after a promise on her part, to meet him again in the parlour, when Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith were gone to bed, he returned back, and she proceeded to the rectory, according to agreement.

She went up the back stairs to Evelyn’s room, whom she found extended on the bed and his eyes shut.

“Fat, are you asleep, Mr. Evelyn, Cot pless us? Cet up I have news for you.”

Percival

Percival opened his eyes, but, in attempting to rise, fell back with such violence as alarmed his confidant; he, however, in a faint voice, begged she would tell him her news directly.

It was with visible joy he heard Winifred was to follow Ellen, he entreated her to let him know every thing that happened, and above all, to conceal the secret he had entrusted to her from all the world, even from Ellen herself, and not tell the dearest friend she had, he was sick of love.

Winifred swore, as she had done before, without the smallest inward reproach; for as Joseph was to be her husband, she had no idea it was any breach of confidence to tell him all she knew.

Miss Meredith's foot on the stair, coming to enquire after Evelyn's health, shortened her visit; and, after promising to write to him by David (the rector's man) away went Winifred.

CHAP. X.

POSSESSED of Winifred's declaration, that Ellen would not have Lord Claverton, Joseph communicated it to his Lordship, and received five guineas in reward for past and earnest of future services; the terms he was on with his sweetheart gave him an excuse to visit Castle Howel as long as Lord Claverton chose to stay in the country, which, his Lordship resolved should depend on events.

In the mean time, as the whole family now at Code Gwyn were his aversion, as the intense coldness of the weather prevented his going out, and as, indeed, he would have no pretence for staying if he was able to travel, it was, in the present posture of affairs, the most convenient plan he could adopt, to be

too

too much indisposed to leave his apartment, and as Mrs. Griffiths was a person he now chose to be well with, he patiently listened to her dissertations on water gruel and white soups.

Joseph's last interview with Winifred was very tender, he, consequently, knew every syllable that had passed at the rectory; and the five guineas in his pocket was a stimula to industry he was resolved to deserve; but he was too artful, at this interview, to drop a word in favor of his Lord: No, all Joseph's wishes were centered in the little farm, with his dear Winny! and as he confirmed this assertion with many fashionable oaths, they separated in mutual good humour, and unbounded confidence, on *one* side, at least.

The noble owner of Castle Howel now experienced there *were* amusements more grateful to his feelings than even Botany; he pointed out to Ellen the different classes of learning and literature that enlightened the world;

described the progress refinement and luxury had made in modern times; spoke of the immortal Shakespeare, and quoted several beautiful passages, suitable to her comprehension, and so adapted his information to the experience of his fair pupil, that after a long morning passed in the library, Lord Castle Howel had the satisfaction to perceive the restless absence of thought, with which she had at first heard him, gradually change into eager attention; *her eyes* sparkled with pleasure, the rapidity of her questions and the quickness of her apprehension flattered and delighted *him*, and often did he regret, that the tyranny of custom forbade him to undertake the *sole* information of such a mind himself.

In the evening his Lordship taught her the gamut, both vocal and instrumental. † She played on the harp a number of tunes by ear, and accompanied it with her voice, but the *science* of music was a matter she was totally unacquainted with; how this and other female attainments came to be unknown to the

Miss

3
+ both in one Evening

Miss Merediths, will appear in the course of this history; *all they knew* they had taught Ellen.

The hour of retirement was less irksome than the preceding night; she had sufficient subject for recollection, equally new and delightful, and her only wish, after the welfare of her friends at Code Gwyn, was, that Percival Evelyn could witness and share in the expansion of her mind.

Winifred arrived early next morning, and the Lieutenant and Doctor Macsheatn rode over before dinner.

The Earl received them with the utmost cordiality, and the reader will suppose Lady Margaret was not less condescending.

In the mean time Lord Claverton was deliberating on the step he should next take; Joseph was shut up with him the most part of the day—and as it was purposed Ellen's school

education should take place when the Christmas recess ended, it was settled between Doctor Macsheat and his noble Patron, that Bath was the precise place likely to renovate a constitution, injured by the hot climate from whence they were just arrived; and, preparations were accordingly begun for their departure.

The communication between the families of Castle Howel and Code Gwyn, became every day more frequent; the Miss Merediths were good horse-women, and Ellen delighted to see them; the severity of the weather was the Earl's objection to *her* riding, but he was pleased when his sister took her in the chariot to visit Code Gwyn, because she returned more cheerful and happy.

A Nobleman of Lord Claverton's rank in the neighbourhood, was also an object for politeness: The Earl rode over to visit Sir Arthur, and invite Lord Claverton to Castle Howel. The cultivation of this acquaintance
was

was of too much importance to Lord Claverton's views to be neglected; he accepted, with great satisfaction, an offered corner in the Earl's carriage, and during the course of the visit, Lord Castle Howel understanding he meant, as well as themselves, to make some stay at Bath, very politely pressed him to accept of the same convenience thither, which, the reader will be sure, he as politely accepted, and immediately wrote to order his carriage and servants to meet him there.

Every thing thus en train, Winifred, full of her importance at the fine Castle, of the fine cloaths making for Ellen, of the fine vows of her lover, and a long etcetera of finery—entirely forgot, both Evelyn and her promise. At every excursion to Code Gwyn, as Ellen was the oracle of the parlour, Winifred gave her orations in the servant's-hall.

Sir Arthur, who, from his sedentary life, greedily devoured every bit of news, kept Ellen at his elbow from the moment of her

arrival to her departure, asking a thousand questions ; while she, who knew no pleasure superior to his amusement, stored up every anecdote she heard, and every occurrence that happened, for his entertainment.

- Lord Claverton saw there was no possibility of obtaining a moment of her attention, and therefore became, with the family, an auditor of her sensible prattle.

Winifred, on her part, held forth to the servants, in their different ways, with an air of profound knowledge ; she told her aunt, that all *her* experience would not carry her the day through at Castle Howel ; and, as to her uncle, "Cot help the owld man, his white hairs would stand an end if he had as many sorts of liquors to cork and uncork as the putler at Castle Howel ; the cook, Cot knows, was a dish washer, and the tairy mait mate coot putter enuff, but nothing like the putter at Castle Howel."

"And

“And so you have learn’d,” said old Griffiths, “already to despise your native home, I foresee thou wilt return as ragged as a colt.”

“Cot help you, uncle, ragget! why there’s no end to the riches at Castle Howel.”

Old Griffiths shook his head in token of incredulity and disgust, and the rest of the male domestics followed his example.

Mrs. Griffiths called her an upstart ignorant wench; she warranted she could manage as good a family as any in the County.

The maids felt themselves doubly hurt; first, in having their abilities degraded, next, in seeing their old fellow servant so finely dressed, and so full of airs; so that poor Winifred, abused by all, was obliged to seek consolation, where, indeed it was always ready, from Mr. Joseph, and declared she would not ask to come again with Miss Ellen, among such a low set; yet, as often as the carriage

was ordered she made the same request, repeated the same stories, with the same effect, and left Code Gwyn with the same declaration.

At length the day being fixed for their departure, Ellen chose to go on the Sunday to take leave of her friends, and, with the little vanity natural to her sex, had her hair dressed by Lady Margaret's woman, wore a new green fatten habit, with a white beaver hat, and green feathers, and attended by Winifred, in a drab cloth Joseph, a black hat and handsome band: They met the family at Code Gwyn church.

Every eye was turned from the *Creator* to the *created*; it was not that Ellen looked more beautiful, but she was finer and more *unlike* themselves.

Lady Meredith and her daughter's hearts dilated, the pew door was thrown open, they handed her in, and even the good Rector suffered

ferred his attention to be a moment taken from his duty.

Mutual gratulations however soon subsided; the respect she had always been taught was due to a place of worship, solemnized her features, but her eye glanced involuntarily to the Rector's pew, where Evelyn used to sit; no Evelyn was there; she eagerly explored every part of the church, and still no Evelyn was to be seen.

She coloured.

What! did Percival Evelyn know she was coming to Code Gwyn, for the last time, for she did not know how many months, and was he not desirous of bidding her farewell? — “Well, who cares!” and she sat down in the middle of the Psalms.

“I have not seen him since I left my grandfather's! no, not once! and my uncle, I

G 5

have

have not seen him either! and it is now above a fortnight."

"Pray, aunt Mary, where is Percival Evelyn?"

"Lord, child, did you not receive my letter about him?"

"Letter! no: I never received a letter in all my life, when did you send it?"

"Above a week ago, Mr. Joseph, Lord Claverton's man, promised to give it Wini-fred for you."

"Then I am sure he forgot it; but what of Percival?"

"Why, my dear he has been dying."

Ellen turned pale.

"But

“But he is better now and will dine with us—my brother thought him too weak to sit in the cold church.”

Ellen's face changed to the deepest scarlet, and she fixed her eyes on the pictures in the prayer book, without attending to the service, till roused by Lady Meredith at the end.

Nothing, during the ride home, occupied Ellen, but Percival's illness; and though Lord Claverton was eagerly waiting to hand her out of the carriage, and though her Patron had explained to her the propriety of attending to the laws of politeness, she could think of nothing but Percival. Winifred having seen Lady Margaret's maid always attend her Lady immediately on her alighting, and willing to shew her fellow servants her improvements, actually pushed before Lord Claverton.

“Where,” said Ellen, without taking the least notice of the Peer, or any other being,

"where is the letter my aunt Mary sent, by Mr. Joseph, about Percival?"

Winifred coloured; it was the first thought she had given Percival since she left him sick at the Rectory, after having entered into a solemn engagement, to do him all manner of kind offices with her mistress, but as she was too great a lady at Castle Howel to be visible in any part of the house where such bumpkins as the parson's man had access, she had not been in the way of receiving a single message from, or in the recollection of saying a civil thing of, the forgotten Percival: Winifred's, though simple, was not a bad heart, her conscience smote her for her breach of promise to Percival, but no letter had she received from Mr. Joseph, and therefore none could have been forgotten.

"Give me the letter directly," said Ellen, rushing by Lord Claverton, up stairs, without even thinking on Sir Arthur.

"What

"What letter, and where are you going, Ellen?" asked Lady Meredith.

Winifred followed her mistress to her room, and Lord Claverton, who understood more of the matter than any other person, retired to his, and rang for Joseph. They had very little time to arrange affairs, before Winifred rapped, and desired to speak one word with Mr. Joseph, who, on being interrogated about the letter, confessed (with many protestations of sorrow for his carelessness) that he had lost it out of his pocket, on the road to Castle Howel.

She, whose partiality for Joseph was far from decreasing, was easily persuaded to forgive; but Ellen, impatient, uneasy, and anxious to know every thing about Percival, declared he was a very idle young man, and never should do any thing for her again.

Winifred called Cot to witness Joseph was a very honest lat, and would not hurt a worm;
but

but her rhetoric was thrown away. Ellen's displeasure continued, and she went to Sir Arthur with tears in her eyes, and her cheeks glowing with anger: Immediately after Mr. Meredith and Percival entered, the latter supported by his reverend friend.

Ellen shrunk from the paternal embrace of Sir Arthur, and stood aghast.

The countenance of young Evelyn was, as before described, always pale; but it was the paleness of sentiment, a thinking habit, and a pensive turn of mind; his face was oval, perhaps beyond the exact line of beauty; his complexion clear brown, and his eyes large, black and piercing, which, with his dark eyebrows and eye lashes, gave a most interesting turn to his countenance; he was prepossessing and agreeable, and, far beyond mediocrity, handsome. But this was the shadow of his former self. His eyes, no longer brilliant, sunk in his head, his face thin and yellow, his lips parched and burning with hectic fever,
his

his voice tremulous, and an universal weakness pervading his whole frame—he gasped for breath, and unable to answer the kind enquiries of the family, sat down on the nearest chair.

Ellen looked round, the glance of compassion, of sorrow, met her from every eye.

She burst into tears.

“Percival, my dear Percival,” cried she, running towards him, “what is the matter? How long have you been ill?”

Percival tried to speak, but failing in the effort turned away his head.

“What!” cried she, half turning to Mr. Meredith, “can’t he speak? Percival, won’t you speak to *me*, to Ellen, your own Ellen?”

Without turning his head, the blood faintly mantling into his face,

“You

"You have forgot ME, Ellen, *quite, quite* forgot *me.*"

Ellen did not answer, her arm rested on him, and his hand involuntarily clasped hers, as it hung over his shoulder. He then began to answer his friends, and say, how much better he was; he breathed freer, and although the observations Lady Meredith could not help making, were not the most pleasing, either to Sir Arthur or herself, yet, as this was to be the last interview, and as she loved Percival, she chose rather to *seem* not to *see*, than be *obliged* to *censure*.

They were in this situation when Lord Claverton made his appearance: Strange effects have been related from looking on the Gorgon. Lord Claverton did not actually turn to stone, but all the colours of the rainbow were by turns predominant in his face.

Lady Meredith endeavoured to divert the attention of Lord Claverton from the young pair,

pair, *and them* from each other, but having tried all ways she could think of, gave the matter up. The dinner was the most silent meal they had ever made, and was dispatched with that impatience of restraint, which a family, in the full confidence of each other, must be supposed to feel, on the eve of separation, in the presence of a stranger.

Lord Claverton felt he was himself that restraint.

The pauses in conversation growing longer and more frequent, could not be misunderstood: No man was better acquainted with the etiquette of fine breeding, yet, in this instance, he could not prevail on himself to leave to themselves a family, whose insipidity was his aversion, whose plain manners were his contempt; for, opposite to him sat Ellen and Percival, solely occupied by each other, and seeming to wait with impatience the moment when the many eloquent things, spoke in their mutual glances, might be put into words.

“That

"*That* moment," said the haughty Peer, inwardly, "they shall *not* have." He endeavoured to enter into conversation with Catherine.

What was now the subject of her studies? Would she honor him with a commission to send her books of any kind?

Catherine thanked him, but she had enough for her life time; besides, there were no new Romances.

A silence ensued. He was still more unfortunate in his next effort.

"Had the early lambs suffered by the cold weather," was a question to Miss Agnes, from which he had great hopes.

It was answered with a formal "No."

Again a dead silence.

Mr.

Mr. Meredith vexed, and really offended, at a restraint, which grew more intolerable every moment, asked Lady Meredith if she would not order coffee, and, as soon as it was over, taking Ellen and his mother in each hand, and bowing to Lord Claverton, he led them out of the room ; they were followed by the other ladies.

Poor Percival sat with his eyes fixed on the door, which closed after them ; not being asked to go, he wanted resolution to move, and endured a three hours silence the picture of despair.

Sir Arthur did indeed enter into a kind of forced conversation for some time, but fell insensibly into his evening nap.

Lord Claverton still persevered in his plan, which Percival's modesty assisted ; for though not considered, by the Peer, of importance enough to be spoken to on any other occasion, yet *now* he condescended to address a few insignificant

insignificant questions to him, and so contrived to render him his entertainer, who was the object of his hatred.

At length, supper, and Lady Meredith with her family, relieved all parties. Ellen's eyes were red and swelled, she drew her stool between her grandfather and grandmother, and, grasping a hand of each, sat totally absorbed in her own reflections; and although Lord Claverton had the mortification to remain quite unnoticed, that mortification was much softened when he observed she was not more attentive to any other part of the company, except indeed at the moment when Mr. Meredith and his eleve departed, when her adieus were more tender and oftener repeated than sat entirely easy on him; he, however, consoled himself in the certainty that this would be the last interview, at least for some time, with the formidable Percival, for the next day he accompanied her to Bath, where Lord Castle Howel's carriage set her down at the first school in that polite city.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THUS, then, a new world was opened to our heroine; the well qualified governess of this little seminary was a woman, whose reputation, as a female writer, had been established, without estranging her from the duties of her situation; and she wisely employed her excellent sense in the cultivation of the human mind.

Under so good a judge, both of *matter* and *manner*, the improvements of her pupils was, as might be expected, rapid and systematical: Mrs. Forrest, though prepossessed by the beauty of the young stranger, immediately discovered the deficiencies in her education:

Ellen,

Ellen, on her part, was confounded, to see ladies, much younger than herself, perfect mistresses of accomplishments, for which she had but just began to acquire a taste; comparing herself with her new associates, how ignorant, how contemptible did she appear; what time would it not require, what application, to become what they *now* were.

With the playful avidity natural to young minds, used to a regular succession of instruction, she saw them varying music, drawing, reciting in different languages, and fine works, to all which she was a total stranger.

Unable to bear a comparison so humiliating, tears filled her eyes, and dropped on her white bosom.

The sensible governess was not less attentive to her new charge, and drawing the most favorable conclusions from the observations she had seen her make, insinuated herself into her confidence, by a judicious mixture of instruction

struction and compliment, and described, with such apparent ease, the gradations through which a perfect knowledge of all female accomplishments were to be attained, and so entirely entered into the true spirit of politeness, by contriving to raise her pupil's opinion of her *own* ability, as she imprest her with respect *for* and attention *to* herself, that all her uneasy sensations subsided; she wrote a short letter to Lady Meredith, and then joined her school-mates in perfect good humour.

Lord Castle Howel gave every charge relative to his protegee; he obtained as a great favor, that Winifred should be admitted into Mrs. Forrest's family, but all conversation was strictly forbid with her young lady: The truth is, that though Ellen approached as near perfection as most heroines of her age, yet she certainly had a welch accent, which, to the refined ears of Mrs. Forrest, and her ladies, sounded a little uncouth; and, as Winifred's was a barbarous jargon of neither Welch nor English, but a bad mixture of both, which
she

she plainly saw would never be got rid of, she prudently conditioned for their entire separation. — *Much use her being there*

Ellen's cheek crimsoned, and a tear of regret filled her eye, at this sentence, but a moment's recollection, when Mrs. Forrest explained the reason, changed her regret to gratitude, for such early attention to a defect her own ear reproached her with, whenever she spoke, or was spoken to, by her polished school fellows.

Winifred was not indeed so acquiescent, but as murmuring had no effect, she quietly took her station in the laundry, contenting herself with making faces, nodding, winking, when she saw her young lady, and laying out the contents of her purse in fruit, which, as it was a breach of Mrs. Forrest's laws, she took great delight in supplying her with.

When our young novitiate made her farewell courtesy to her friends, Lord Castle
Howel

Howel felt a vacuum he could not easily account for; he had been lately amused by a pursuit, that superceded even his botanical experiments; he had spared no time, pains, or expence towards bringing the most beautiful production of nature to the high perfection he foresaw she would reach; he placed her where (for this end) she was to pass a considerable time, in a temporary seclusion from the world, and his visits were no longer necessary, or indeed proper.

To observe, and to assist, in the expansion of a young and ingenious mind; to watch the opening talents; to foster the seeds of virtue; to "teach the young idea how to shoot," is such an exquisite feast of reason, no wonder Lord Castle Howel's mind rejected in the instant all its former avocations, and recurred only to the hours passed in such delightful employment: Restless and uneasy, he proposed an excursion to Bristol Wells, before they returned to London.

Lord Claverton, though he appeared inactive, and even inattentive, to what was going forward, never lost sight of his original plan; from the instant he beheld Ellen he marked her for his own; rude and ignorant as she at first appeared, her graces softened on his observation; what she might be *made* struck *him* no less forcibly than it did Lord Castle Howel, though without the same disinterested ardor to assist the noble work of nature.

To be Lord Claverton's toy, his amusement, as he had early planned, it was no matter how *little* Ellen knew; but to be his ostensible Mistress, to shew him the envied possessor of grace, ease, understanding, and such beauty! she could not know *too much*; it was indeed cursed impertinent of Lord Castle Howel to be meddling; an old fool! surely he might lay out his money to more advantage; and so thought both Doctor Macsheat and Lady Margaret; but the more attached the Earl continued to his young favorite, the more difficult of access she would prove to him; to

wean him, therefore, from an object on which his mind voluntarily turned, when Lord Claverton could so much better dispose of that object himself, was a point too desirable and important to be neglected; he knew the Doctor's views in the Castle Howel family, and the prudential caution with which he proceeded was an example not lost on the Peer; the Doctor indeed was a Socrates in love.

Although Lady Margaret assured him she had realized something very comfortable for a matrimonial garnish, she had only *assured* him, and he was resolved to have proof; for he had no reason to flatter himself his alliance would be eligible to the Earl, and, as in case of the worst, there were many snug little things to be procured by interest, as well for medical as other men, he was determined to be slow and sure; Lord Claverton, therefore, easily convinced Doctor Macsheat, it was absolutely necessary to proceed immediately to London, and Lady Margaret, who was as anxious to retain *her* conquest, as his Lordship could be

to secure *his*, became an immediate convert to Mr. Macsheat's opinion; her nervous complaints returning, she could not live without Dr. Warren; she retired to her apartment the same evening, and continued growing worse 'till the hour was fixed for their departure for London.

The Earl employed the last morning in selecting, from the different shops, a variety of useful and ornamental trinkets, which, with a purse very liberally filled, he sent Ellen, after he had taken leave, and Lord Claverton, with great apparent modesty, entreated Lady Margaret would have the goodness to present Miss Meredith, in *his* name, a very elegant little watch, and fesse montre, as a faint memorial of the happy hours he had passed under the hospitable roof of her venerable grandfather.

Ellen's heart ached, separated from every being and every scene which happy childhood had endeared to her memory, Lord Castle

Howel was the rock of her confidence, a superior being, to whom she looked up with a mixture of affection and respect, she dropped involuntarily on her knees, as he took her hand, "Be sure you write to *me*, Ellen," said he, raising and pressing her to his bosom. "And me," said Lady Margaret.

Lord Claverton coloured, he even trembled, as he kissed the fair hand of Ellen, whose eyes followed the carriage 'till it was obscured by the dust of the London road.

A calm succeeded the busy scenes, which, for the last four months, totally occupied our heroine, very favorable to instruction and to recollection; the avidity with which she received the former, rendered her a great favorite with her governess; the mortification she felt at her own deficiencies, was a spur to emulation, and the idea of surprizing the friends she loved with her acquirements, a constant incitement to application.

No longer in habits of the robust exercise in which she had hitherto delighted, her person grew delicate, and her air became (from the union of improved mind and body) easy and elegant; her manners, still charmingly vivacious, were soft and politely refined; she had naturally a sweet as well as strong voice, under Ruzzina it became possessed of all those thrilling graces, which melt on the ear, and reaches the soul of harmony.

The harp, from her early practice, was the instrument she soon most excelled on, but her general improvements in music were astonishingly rapid.

Winifred, though kept at humble distance, continued, nevertheless, to make Ellen the confidant of Mr. Joseph's constant passion, by shewing her the letters she received from him; it was not indeed in nature, so passionate a lover should forget a mistress, of whom his Lord so often reminded him; nor could Ellen help understanding how frequently Lord Claverton

Verton spoke of the pleasant hours he passed at Code Gwyn, and that he proposed being at Bath early in the Spring Season.

That Nobleman continued to keep up his acquaintance in Grosvenor-Street; and Doctor Macsheat having satisfied himself as to Lady Margaret's prudent acquirements, took a house in Conduit-Street, which he elegantly furnished, and in which he gave handsome entertainments to select parties.

By means of his Patron, and Patroneſs, he was getting into snug practice; he kept one maid, and two men, at board wages, jobbed his horses, generally dined with Lord Claverton, in Portman-Square, and supped with Lady Margaret, in Grosvenor-Street.

Habits and customs of many years may be suspended, but will not soon be totally eradicated—the Earl, by degrees, returned to his botany; this, however, did not lessen the pleasure of Ellen's correspondence, or prevent his

punctually and affectionately answering her letters.

The Lieutenant was an inmate of his house, and fellow labourer in the botanical experiments, but although few noblemen might, with more certainty of success, ask a favor of the Minister, his mind was so strangely abstracted from common occurrences, that it never once struck him, how desirable to a young officer promotion was; and the Lieutenant, though panting to be employed, was too diffident to drop a sentence that would remind him of it.

Lord Claverton was often favored with a sight of Ellen's letters, heard of her improvements, and languished for an opportunity of again beholding a face, that (in spite of all the blandishments with which quality and fortune are surrounded in London) was ever before him.

Nobody.

Nobody was more eager to pay court to every new beauty, to admire, to toast ; nobody entered with more gout and less delicacy into every fashionable intrigue, than Lord Claverton ; his fortune large and independant ; his title and family ancient and respectable ; his face handsome, and his person, for a man of quality who had been seven years in the guards, still tolerable : It is not to be doubted, but there were fathers, guardians, and brothers, who had particularly distinguished him, he visited every where—but the fair Ellen swam on the surface, she floated on his imagination, and whatever variety or beauty met his eye, fancy painted *her* in colours more glowing, and all that pleased in the many combined in her.

Intrigue, the business of his life, when compared to the tranquil possession of Ellen, was no longer desirable ; the style of her writing was polished and animated, and what most charmed him, was, that the same innocence and inexperience which inspired and kept hope alive, ran through all.

A Machiavel in intrigue, no point escaped him that led to the haven of his wishes, and, in consequence of his politics, Ellen and Winifred had letters by the same post, which, as they are originals, we beg the reader will accept in their native dress.

“DEAR ELLEN,

“Never let the noble heart despair, as we
 “say at sea; for here, when I had been all
 “the year lagging at Lord Castle Howel’s
 “elbow, and often dining with the first Lord,
 “without his so much as mentioning me.
 “To be sure, he did not think of it, that I
 “must say, but, God help me, I thought
 “enough of it, I’m sure. Well, all of a sud-
 “den, Lord Claverton sends for me: “My
 “brave lad, said he, and he took my hand,
 “you are so taken up with the Earl, you for-
 “get your old friend. So, you may be sure
 “I apologized—but mark. Says he, I re-
 “member how you fought in the Lion, when
 “you was wounded. And so I was, Ellen,
 “I

"I thought I should have gone to David
"Jones's locker. Now, says he, I don't
"like such a brave lad as you should lye by,
"and so go to the Admiralty, and there lies
"a commission for you. Well, Ellen, I could
"not speak, but away I scampered, and now
"am Captain of the Hyslop, and we are
"stationed to the East Indies, I shall go down
"to take leave of my good father and mo-
"ther; Lord Claverton is coming to Bath,
"and conveys me so far on my way; you
"may be sure I will bring you a cargo of
"diamonds from India, as big as Potatoes."

"From your affectionate uncle,

"LEWIS MEREDITH,

"Captain of the Hyslop Sloop of War."

Before this letter was read quite through,
in the presence of the governess, the voice
of Winifred, remarkably shrill, was heard at
the door of the room.

“As Cot shall help me, and pless me, and I wish I may co to the tivil himself, if I don’t speak to Miss Ellen; why, sure you are worse than the children of Isralitish, not to let me carry my mistress coot tidings, about my master’s son, the Captain, who, as Cot shall save me, will soon be an Admiral, and a Commadore.

“But I tell you no.”

“Tell me nothing, I shall tell my mistress,” and in bounced Winifred, her face in a glow, and an open letter in her hand, which she eagerly presented to Ellen, who, in conformity to the rule of the school, handed it to the governess.

“As Cot shall judge me, Miss Ellen, that’s very civil of you; if you won’t read my letters yourself, I am sure you need not give it to other people; pray, Miss, read it yourself, and you’ll see what a precious coot creat man Lord Claverton is; my Cot! my Cot! I would give
forty

forty coot shillings to be at Code Gwyn when the news reaches there."

This was the exact chord, it vibrated on all Ellen's feelings.

"My dear, dear grandmamma!"

"Ay, and my old master! As Cot shall save me, he will not want his wheel chair: Oh, what a brave man is Lord Claverton!"

"How happy will it make my aunts!"

"Yes, and the Reverent too; aye, and Mr. Percival—I dare for to say, with Cot's blessing, he will go beyond sea, with the Captain. Oh, what a fine man is Lord Claverton!"

Such a period has elapsed since the name of Percival has been mentioned, the reader will conclude he has not been much the subject of our thoughts, that, however, is a secret which time only must discover—it called a blush

blush into Ellen's cheeks, and suddenly stopped her rapturous expressions of joy.

Mrs. Forrest having slightly run over Winifred's letter, returned it to her, saying, it was not of importance enough to require Miss Meredith's perusal.

Winifred received it with an air of pique, and a sly wink at Ellen, which meant, "we'll read it together however."

The hours of rest were literally less so to our heroine than any she had hitherto passed at Bath, she got into a chain of recollections which did not besfriend sleep, and early in the morning Winifred was at her bed-side with the letter, which, as it is the duty of a faithful historian to relate facts, I must own she had not fortitude to decline reading—it ran thus.

"Me deraft Winny !

"Ever sence I saw your butiful eys, I never
"gets any rest nor never goes no were, but

" wat i think on you, as for a good noble
 " master thank God i have that, an now I
 " must tell you my Lord is very grate with
 " the king, an he need only ax and have, and
 " he has axd the king to make the noble les-
 " tenant a Captain, and to be certain if that
 " is not prefering him i dont no wat is, it is
 " with some peple out of site out of mind,
 " but God forbid that should be my case, or
 " my master's, tho' to be sure Lord Castle
 " Howel mite a done it over and over, but
 " some people will not do themselves good
 " nor any one else either; an my Lord says
 " to me, Joseph sais he, I wish I could just
 " peep in at Code Gwyn, just to see old Sir
 " Arthur, wen the Captain goes home, and
 " sweete Miss Ellen, and then he sighs and
 " moans—Oh! Winny, if there is one tru
 " lover in the herth, it is my master, and
 " me—we shall be at bath in a week at fur-
 " dest."

"I am till deth do us part

"Your true lover

"JOSEPH."

"What a noble man is Lord Claverton," whispered Winifred, fearing to awake two young ladies, who lay in the same room.

"He is very good indeed," said Ellen, "I could not have thought—"

"As to that old fusty odd mortal, Lord Castle Howel—"

"Hush, Winifred, I won't have you speak disrespectfully of him."

"As Cot shall save me, Miss Ellen, I believe you hate Lord Claverton, for making my young master a great man."

This exclamation put an end to the conversation, for Winifred's voice and colour were sure to rise with her passions, and the ladies were disturbed.

From this period Ellen began to expect the arrival of the Captain and his Patron, a kind

kind of perturbation and suspense agitated her, and the seeds of vanity, afterwards conspicuous in her character, shewed itself for the first time. She was unusually attentive to her dress, and practised an infinite variety of graces in order to astonish Lord Claverton.

At length the expected visitants were announced.

Lord Claverton had heard Ellen was taller and much improved, but by the admiration with which he appeared to be struck, it would seem *this* was the first time he had ever seen her.

Her hair, no longer partly shading and partly displaying her white neck and forehead, in a profusion of wild ringlets, was dressed in the nicest order; her fine falling shoulders innured to braces, now, of themselves, fell in the most graceful form; her shape, which was only small and strait when she came to Bath, was forming into woman; her eyes, in
which

which a saucy vivacity was used to play, now withdrew from his ardent gaze, and dropped in modest dignity on the floor. The Captain saluted her in his blunt way, with,

“Ellen, you look like an angel, and ’tis an angel only can speak my gratitude here,” leading her to Lord Claverton.

Ellen courtesied—“Permit me, my Lord, to thank you for my uncle, Sir Arthur, for Lady Meredith, for —”

“For yourself, dear angel,” interrupted Lord Claverton, in a transport he could not repress.

Ellen blushed, Mrs. Forrest offered her congratulations, and the conversation became general.

As the Captain was impatient to pay his duty to his parents, that he might be ready to sail—and Lord Claverton saw, that without the

the particular favor of the governess he could not hope to be admitted, when his friend was gone ; he assailed her in the vulnerable part, by a judicious and sensible critique on female writing, in which he contrived to give hers a delicate preference.

However acceptable to the woman, and flattering to the author, the praise of a man of Lord Claverton's sense and rank ; however soothing to the vanity to which the wisest of the sex are a little inclined, Mrs. Forrest's own strict conduct, as well as regard to the sacred trust reposed in her, by the parents and guardians of her pupils, rendered her very difficult of access, but Lord Claverton's mind was, as before said, a daring and inventive one, he soon hit on an expedient to remove those impediments.

There are, the polite world *well know*, a description of women, who, having done every thing in their little power, to scandalize one sex, and dupe the other in their youth,
carry

carry their propensities so far into age, as to become odious to society ; and there are also even among these, *some*, who have art enough to shield themselves from general detestation, by a profuse expenditure of ill gotten wealth ; by playing high, giving splendid entertainments, opening their doors to an indiscriminate mixture of company, and making their houses convenient and agreeable to all parties ; by these means they are sure of getting by degrees into some sort of estimation : — Ladies beginning to get a name, such as mistresses made wives ; ladies beginning to lose a name, such as wives made mistresses ; old women with money who want husbands ; young ones, with none, who want any thing that offers ; gamblers of both sexes ; fortune hunters, old debauchees, and military smarts, are sure to grace their assemblies ; if a great deal of money is either won or lost, the high bred ladies will swallow the bait, and so the house of a wretch, whose character is not only notorious, but dangerous, becomes the fashion.

Mrs

Mrs. Elderton, an Irish lady of this description, led the ton at Bath, Lord Claverton was her very old friend, and it was not in nature for her to penetrate further into his designs than he literally intended. Mrs. Forrest, she said, was a charming sensible woman, she wished to see her school, and Lord Claverton begged to escort her.

Never was any thing so delightful! She invited the amiable governess and a select number of her lovely pupils, to her public dinner: If Mrs. Forrest had a foible it was fondness for fashionable company, and though ill natured people talked freely of Mrs. Elderton, who would not ill natured people talk freely of? Mrs. Forrest thought her extremely amiable, and from this period she and her ladies were often invited to Mrs. Elderton's large parties, and often supplied by her with tickets for all public places; as she could not object to such flattering attentions from her, and as Miss Meredith was a particular favorite, she was always one of her companions.

panions. Lord Claverton, who was every where, took care to be at hand, to pay the most respectful attention to Mrs. Forrest, and the most oblique ones to Ellen.

It had been intended by the Castle Howels to visit Ellen, on their return through Bath, but an event happened that detained them in London the whole year — this was the indisposition of Miss Capus, (for she had never assumed the title of Castle Howel) the unhappy woman had long been afflicted with a dropsey, which, at length, baffled the art of medicine: When the Doctor pronounced her doom she began to think of the bourne, from whence there is no return, and fervently implored Lord Castle Howel would deign to pronounce his personal forgiveness; his refusal added strength to her naturally peevish and obstinate temper, she wearied him and Lady Margaret, and finding both inexorable, wrote to the ladies — Frances and Gertrude, for their influence in favor of a dying penitent.

“Dying!”

"Dying! and is the wretch really dying? and is it yet possible we may live to see an heir to our family honors we do not detest?" cried the elder maiden.

"I forgive every thing if she will but die!" answered the younger.

"What does she say?" resumed Lady Frances, looking at the letter, "She cannot die in peace 'till she is forgiven by the Earl."

"Bless me," exclaimed Lady Gertrude, "was there ever any thing so foolish, not to let the creature die!"

Pen and ink was called for, and both the ladies signed a short letter, requesting their nephew to let his wife die! and to give them the earliest notice of the happy event, as they would immediately leave their seat in the North, and, notwithstanding the length and expence of the journey, join him in London.

Rather

Rather forced into the measure than convinced it was necessary, Lord Castle Howel took a reluctant journey, where love, in his juvenile days often carried him, and exchanged forgiveness with his sick wife: But the lady did not, as the sage maidens seemed to expect, expire immediately, her disorder turned so perversely favorable, it was five months doubtful whether the strength of her constitution would not at last conquer.

During this time Ellen was pursuing her studies, and Lord Claverton not an instant neglectful of his—he had gained what he considered so great an advantage in his familiar access to Ellen, that he did not doubt, with the aid of Winifred, but his business was in a fair way; but the same object always seen in the same party, and the season being arrived when it is the fashion for people to run from Bath with as much avidity, as two months before they run to it, surmises began to be dispersed about the few remaining card tables, not exactly to the credit of Mrs. Elderton,
and

and tending to injure her new friend, the governess; of this Lord Claverton was one of the first to be acquainted, and as he possessed the happy art of turning most common events to his own advantage, he was also the first to communicate it to Mrs. Forrest, who was charmed with his candour, and considered his immediately leaving Bath (which he protested he did solely on her account) as a very proper and delicate compliment: Thus then he left Bath in high favor, and proceeded to his house on the forest in as high spirits, to prepare for the reception of the little charmer, who he was resolved to allure thither, when he returned, which he intended should be very early in the winter; but fate had otherwise disposed of her.

It was August before Lord Castle Howel could send his aunts the account of his enfranchisement; it was September before they arrived in town; in October Mr. Meredith brought a card from Lord Castle Howel, to

request Miss Meredith might be consigned to his care.

It is impossible to describe the wild sensations of joy our heroine felt at this unexpected summons; she could hardly believe she was indeed going home to Code Gwyn, to see all the dear relatives on whom she still doated; nor was Winifred less delighted; they ran from room to room, embracing and congratulating each other; the cloaths were hastily packed, not without some little murmuring from Mrs. Forrest, who really felt regret at parting so suddenly with a pupil for whom she had the most perfect friendship; the chaise was at the door before six the next morning, and, attached as Winifred was to Joseph, she even neglected to apprise him of their journey.

The carriage, though they travelled post, bore no proportion to the celerity of Ellen's ideas; she remembered every town they went through on their way to Bath, slept at the
same

same inns, and, at length, eagerly recognised the turning from Castle Howel road to Code Gwyn; but at the stone stile of the church there was no Percival—Winifred looked too, “Well, Cot forgive me!” cried she, recollecting her broken promise.

The carriage passed with great velocity, and soon stopped at Code Gwyn. The same placid benevolent countenances and affectionate hearts—the servants, the house, exactly in the state she left it, raised a thousand tender sensations in her mind—she flew rather than stepped from the chaise, the servants were clamorous in their joy, and the family mingled tears with embraces; Winifred was received with vast deference in the servants hall, and even her uncle and aunt called her Mrs. Winifred. Ellen fancied she saw a furrow more on her grandfather’s cheeks, and sometimes a pensive glance shoot from Lady Meredith’s eye, but as joy and tenderness were most predominant, this was the fancy

of the moment, she retired early by Lady Meredith's desire, and never did innocence enjoy more sweet repose.

CHAP. XII.

THE next morning the momentary observations made the preceding night were renewed, an unaccustomed gravity presided in every countenance.

"Set by me, my love, my own Ellen," said Lady Meredith, taking her hand.

"Well, my child, you have been a traveller, does not our plain house appear little and contemptible, after —"

"Dear

"Dear madam, what are you saying? — Little! contemptible! 'tis a paradise I wish to live and die in."

Lady Meredith kissed her forehead, "But there are changes, my dear, in life."

"Changes! What changes! What do you mean? Speak out, my dear grandmamma."

Lady Meredith hesitated. "I knew I could not, your uncle will retire with you, he will read you some letters."

Ellen stood up — "This moment, then, dear Sir," said she, "don't keep me in suspense."

He accompanied her to another room — But it is now necessary to carry my reader back to some family anecdotes which we have barely hinted at.

The want of an heir in the Castle Howel family was a subject of the severest regret to every part of that branch of it in which the titles and estates were now vested; on demise of the present Earl it returned to the descendants from a second son, whose representative, a libertine on principle, had actually, with secret and false professions of love, deceived both his cousins, Lady Frances and Lady Gertrude Howel, at the same time that an artful and low-bred woman had drawn him into a private marriage; the children of this low union were the presumptive heirs of Castle Howel; the father braved the resentment of the injured ladies, the wife scoffed at, and the sons derided it. At the death of Lord Castle Howel's wife the exasperated virgins disclosed the full extent of provocation to a hatred so inveterate; and it was then that they entreated him to be the avenger of their injured honor, by taking a wife from whom they might hope a disappointment to their wicked cousin; both ladies offering to settle

settle their whole fortune on the issue of such marriage.

Lord Castle Howel fancied himself attached to Ellen, merely as a beautiful and amiable child; but now, urged to make choice of a wife, from family reasons, his heart claimed a different interest in her, and that choice instantly fell on Ellen.

He mentioned her to his sister, and to his aunts: — Lady Margaret, in her heart, little caring who possessed Castle Howel after her time, was only solicitous to retain the good things of it, as long as she could, to herself; it was, therefore, a very unpleasant thing to hear her brother talk of a wife at all; but, if he must marry, certainly the young thing he chose would be more governable than a town lady; and, seeing it was not to be avoided, entered, with a tolerable grace, into an animated description of the fair Ellen to her aunts.

When old ladies get certain matters into their heads, it is marvellous with what address they conduct them; they would not suffer his Lordship to sleep before he wrote his proposals to Sir Arthur Meredith, enclosing the card to Mrs. Forrest, in consequence of which our heroine returned to Code Gwyn.

This proposal, then, was the grand spring, on which all the movements at Code Gwyn depended. Mr. Meredith opened the business with becoming gravity, he read the Earl's letter through with as little variation of voice as if it had been a church brief, when finished he laid it down, and looking anxiously at Ellen, saw such unfeigned astonishment in her countenance, such a vague indefinite attempt at recollection, that he asked if he should read it again, and again went through it with the same inflexible gravity, and laid it down, waiting for her answer.

“What

"What is all this," cried Ellen, "I cannot understand you; is it Lord Castle Howel, who has been so good to me, that writes this?"

"There is no other Lord Castle Howel, Ellen."

"And has he been disgracefully married? And is his wife now only dead? I never before heard he had one. And is it possible? Can so grave, so wise a man, act so much like a simpleton? Me! Does he want to marry me! Such a thoughtless giddy girl as me! Uncle, are you not very sorry?"

"Sorry, my dear, for what?"

"That so respectable a being should be so very ridiculous."

"Then," said Mr. Meredith, still more gravely, "you will not accept his Lordship's offer?"

"Accept it, no, to be sure, you would not wish me to marry any body yet, much less an old man!"

"But he is an Earl, Ellen."

"So much the worse, his folly will be more conspicuous."

"If the *folly* of the act is your principal objection, suppose we could prove it one of consummate wisdom?"

"Nobody doubts your logic, uncle, when your heart is in the argument, but I hope that is not the case now."

"And why, my dear, do you hope so?"

"Because I feel I shall be very stubborn."

"That is not like you, Ellen, to be premeditatedly stubborn."

"I

"I cannot help it, I will not be married."

Mr. Meredith arose, "Am I to give this definitive *will not*, to my father and mother?"

"No, I will go to them myself directly; or, if you please—but, uncle, tell me, upon your honor, do you think they wish me to marry Lord Castle Howel?"

"You ask me on my honor, Ellen?"

Mr. Meredith changed colour, hem'd, and drew Ellen's chair nearer his own.

All the concerns, engagements, and interests of this family, had hitherto been conducted with such confidence in each other; so little reserve, either among themselves or towards the world; the *to-days* were so exactly like the yesterdays, so little seemed to be hoped from the future, that could lessen the enjoyments of the present; so little to fear, except in the eternal separation, for which

every member of it was in some degree prepared, that Ellen could only suppose the apparent agitation of Mr. Meredith proceeded from some interest he took in the affairs of Lord Castle Howel; or, that he was disappointed in her rejection of so splendid an offer: In the former case, her own heart, open to sympathy, and generously alive to every sensation of pity, was ready to adopt his inquietudes; but in the latter, as ambition, or a desire of riches, had not yet biaſſed one thought, she sat down predetermined, to combat his prejudices, and retain her own freedom.

It was thus Ellen accounted for Mr. Meredith's change of countenance, and reflections like these occupied her during a silence, which, in spite of every effort on his part, to conquer his feelings, preceded what he had further to say.

Poor Ellen! little did she foresee that the last happy hour she was to spend at Code Gwyn was already past, that the mornings

ings of tranquillity, the noon of ease, and the evening of peace, had abandoned the habitation of Sir Arthur Meredith and his forefathers.

Before Mr. Meredith could speak, a tear dropped from his eye and fell on Ellen's cheek, but ashamed of a weakness, degrading, as he thought, to manhood and christianity, again he hem'd, and in a voice, which, though tremulous at first, soon acquired its usual strength: He informed her, that from various and accumulating expences, some of which could not be avoided, Sir Arthur had been induced to borrow money of a *rich neighbour*, "Perhaps," said he, sighing, "it would have been better we had not been so readily supplied; had any difficulty attended our borrowing, we should have recollected the still greater difficulty of repaying: My father's infirm state of health; your father and mother's death; my mother's grief, which a long time endangered her life; my own natural indolence of temper, are no excuses, though
they

they were complicated causes of our negligence: In short, Ellen, ——”

The equality of Mr. Meredith's temper here gave way to the excess of his feelings! again the big tear dropped on the cheek of his equally agitated auditor, who, totally unacquainted with money concerns, and never having heard of pecuniary wants, except any of her school fellows had been particularly profuse, wants, which the liberality of her patron, and the generosity of her own heart, enabled her to supply, could comprehend very little of what Mr. Meredith wished to disclose; she understood, indeed, for the first time, that Sir Arthur had not every thing in his own power; that Lady Meredith was not happy; that her uncles and aunts must therefore be in affliction, and that the origin of these evils was borrowing money of a rich friend: All this was new, but it was enough for Ellen, the relatives she loved were in distress, to overwhelm her.

“How

"How mistaken have I been," said she, "I thought the blessings and comforts of the world were made on purpose for the good, I knew you were all good, and did not doubt but you had every thing you wanted."

Mr. Meredith sighed. "We may not, Ellen, be in possession of this family mansion another year."

Ellen started.

"We have notice of the foreclosure of the mortgage."

"Mortgage! Who, what is that? Not live in our own house. How can my grandpapa live any where else? it is impossible, he will die, he will break his heart; his wheel-chair, you know, would not run, without danger, except the floor was very even."

"That, that and my dear mother's feelings, is all that afflicts me; for, as to the rest, as my house —"

“Oh, dear! I dare say we could all live very easy there; but who is this Mortgage? What right has he?”

Mr. Meredith then explained the meaning of mortgage, and foreclosure, and, to her further astonishment, informed her, that their kind friend, John Morgan, Esquire, was the gentleman, whose occasions for money was, at this time, so pressing, that though it was, as he declared himself, with extreme reluctance and distress of mind he put them to any inconvenience, he could not possibly do without it. Mr. Meredith stated the impossibility of raising the money, the most to be hoped for was, to join his father in assigning over the whole estate, reserving only the mansion-house, and the grounds belonging to it, for the life of his parents, and even this he doubted whether Mr. Morgan would or could agree to: He continued, that it was proper she should know the very narrow compass in which all their future hopes of comfort lay, before she finally resolved to forego.

forego the prosperity and advantage which were offered to her in Lord Castle Howel's alliance; he trusted, that while he lived he should have a peaceful asylum for her beauty and innocence; but his life was an uncertain tenure, and desirous as he hoped he always should be to put his firm trust in the God of righteousness, he owned, that when he looked on Ellen, and recollected the state in which *his* death would leave her, he dared not express his feelings:—"My health, my dear Ellen," added he, "is already impaired."

Ellen fixed her tearful eye on his pale face, and resumed Lord Castle Howel's letter; the surprise and astonishment which at first filled her was no more, she read it over in anxious search of something alleviating of the poignancy of her feelings.

"Has Lord Castle Howel power?" asked she, in a half whisper, "to remove these misfortunes?"

Mr.

Mr. Meredith gently took the letter from her. "He has it amply in his power to shield you from sharing in it."

"And is that all?" cried she, with vivacity, as if a load of anguish had been removed from her heart, "then never mention his proposal more: But you see that he still promises to be my Patron and protector, a much more honorable as well as suitable character for him. If, indeed, he could have made my dear grandfather happy, and satisfied that ugly man, who I always hated, though he used to bow so low, and flatter me so much, I believe I—I—But as he can't, you know uncle, we will pray to God, and trust in God, and none of us can tell what may yet happen."

The happy eagerness with which Ellen satisfied herself it was not in Lord Castle Howel's power to make her family happy; and the joy that darted from her eyes, when she declared she would hear no more of his proposals, were such convincing proofs, not only that
the

the dazzling offer of making her a Countess had no weight, but that her heart recoiled from the disproportionate union; Mr. Meredith could not prevail on himself to hint what really was true, though he was too generous to urge it as a plea in favor of the marriage, that Mr. Morgan's necessity would certainly give way to his respect for a family allied to Lord Castle Howel, besides the likelihood that his Lordship would assist so old and respectable a relation of his young bride; but these and many other flattering probabilities which might follow, was disregarded when he saw her heart was averse; convinced that if she acceded to the Earl's proposal she would add to the wretched list of young females, who, with the best of dispositions, bound to men for whom they have no predilection, feel *too* late they have hearts as well as hands, he resolved to communicate his sentiments to his father, and spare his niece any solicitation on a subject, against which his own heart revolted.

The

The calamity that threatened the Code Gwyn family was not likely to remain concealed from domestics, who would be such sharers in the common misfortune. Mrs. Griffiths cried so violently in communicating it to Winifred, that it was necessary for her to take a portion of her own double distilled peppermint water; and Mr. Griffiths was too sick to take his morning pipe.

“It signified nothing,” the bailiff said, “to manure that meadow, or crop this field, it is too good for old Morgan.”

A general lassitude and despair blunted the edge of industry, and in the common aspect of domestic management, things, in the vulgar phrase, were actually going to rack and ruin.

A little flower garden, which Ellen and Percival had made, in a corner of the paddock, was the only spot that shewed a careful manager; the thickset hedge, set by herself, was cut in the nicest order, and particularly thriving;

thriving; the small parterre, edged with box and mignonet, which forming a double cypher of P E and E M, was filled up with the choicest flowers in succession, and appeared in continual bloom.

Ellen observed her garden as they drove up to the house, and longed to revisit the scene of her childish labour and amusement; as soon, therefore, as Mr. Meredith left her, she took her hat and began her little walk; crossing the paddock, she was overtaken by Winifred, with swollen eyes and grief-worn countenance, her sighs, not quite so gentle as the zephyr, nor her moanings so soft or harmonious as the dove, little affected her gentle mistress, who, truth to say, had already forgot the mortgage, foreclosure, the offered marriage, and even the affliction of Sir Arthur, and walked along with her eyes fixed on the spot she was approaching, every other faculty totally absorbed in that of thinking.

“The tivel tak riches, and all false hearted people,” quoth Winifred.

Ellen

Ellen was silent.

"That 'Squire Morgan is a tivel in garnet; no wonder his house his haunted by a great black tog in a winding sheet."

Ellen advanced to the wicket.

"Why to be sure, Cot Almighty will let the tivel fetch him in a whirlwind; his own tear sweet taughter was left to be starved alive, and now, you see, he has no chick nor child."

Ellen stopped, and gazing on a beautiful passion flower, that twined round every bush in the garden, softly and sweetly sung,

"Alas! where with him I have stray'd

"I could wander with pleasure alone."

"Are you there, Winifred?"

"Yes, Ma'am," whined Winifred, who though she had expended her stock of sorrow, thought,

thought, on the strength of her aunt's example, she must still be doleful.

"Don't you think it very odd, Winifred?"

"Yes inteeet, Miss, Cot help us all out of our misery."

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Ellen, surprised.

Winifred stared, but presently conjecturing that it was possible Ellen was not yet acquainted with the impending misfortune, and that it did not signify whether she was or not, as it was not in her power to do any good."

"Nay, I am sure, Miss, I don't know what is the matter, but that lazy tog of a gartner have let all my holly hogs and polly hanches die."

"But don't you think it very odd, that—"

"Hod

"Hod, no, Miss; I think nothing hod in this world, since David, the Parson's man, married the still room maid, of Castle Howel."

David at this instant appeared, with a spade and watering pot, but kept aloof.

"But, Winifred, what is become of Percival Evelyn; is it not very odd he is not here with my uncle?"

"Not hod at all, Miss, because he is gone to college."

"To college!"

"Why, to be sure, Miss; because, poor poy, you know he has not cot a prafs fardin of fortin, and so, as my aunt says, our poor tere Reverent does all the coot he can for every poty, and so he is to be his curate; half a lof is petter as no preat."

"God forbid," said Ellen, seriously, "Percival Evelyn should ever want bread."

“Amen! amen! pray Cot, Miss; and I’m sure it would be a marcy if Mr. Joseph and Lord Claverton was to hear of our trouples and our miseries and come to ——”

Winifred was never guilty of thinking, but if she had studied for an unfavorable moment all her life to mention his Lordship, she could not have succeeded better.

“Lord Claverton!” said Ellen, scornfully.

“You forget, Miss, how many fine places he treated you to at Bath.”

“I hate him.”

“And you forget, Miss, he made your uncle a Captain, but the sin of ungrateful is worse even as death.”

“Ah! Winifred, so I had—but I wish I could see Percival Evelyn; don’t you think he will make a very handsome parson?”

"Humph, well enuff for a parson!"

"What does my uncle's man wait for?"

Winifred, immediately bawled out "Fine times for you, Mr. Tavy, to be standing with your hands in your pockets, I suppose your wife works for both."

Nature speaks the same language every where. David, who had been a kind of dangler to Winifred, and had often experienced her mild temper, expected, as he had presumed to marry another, he should not escape without a satyrical fling, he took no notice of her, but leisurely advanced to the little garden, and began to work.

"And pray who set you to work here? I dare say the parson's garden will employ you."

"Why, Mrs. Winifred, nobody set me to work, but as I am not like some folks, say
one

one thing and do another — I like to serve Mr. Percival when his back's turned as well as when I see him; and so," bowing to Ellen, who having been two years in England, and being moreover dressed in a superior style, he had not presumed to accost, although he had formerly been one of her favorites, "and so, as he said, he valued every little seed set in Miss Ellen's garden more than gold; I promised I'd take care of it, and I think, Mrs. Winifred, (leaning on his spade, and looking proudly round) I think I have kept my word."

The hint of broken promises called the colour into Winifred's guilty cheeks; she could not help recollecting certain tokens, and certain promises, all of which she had most unconscionably suffered to slip her memory: But it requires a greater mind than her's to feel a fault and own it, particularly to an inferior, for, so she, who was addressed by a Lord's valet, considered the parson's man of all work; with as haughty a look, therefore, as

she could assume, she endeavoured to hide her guilt, and turned out of the garden, leaving Miss Ellen and David to look at the improvements and talk of Percival: This was a subject not easily exhausted—it would have lasted a long summer's day without intermission; and Ellen was summoned to dinner before she was tired of David's store of anecdotes of what Percival said, how he looked, and what he had done.

CHAP. XIII.

THE affectionate reception our heroine met from the family, on her entering the hall, added to a harmony of spirits, which seemed to have taken possession of her in the garden; and after dinner she brought down her store of baubles and trinkets, and made presents

presents from them to all the family; not a word was said either of Lord Castle Howel, or Mr. Morgan, and the week passed with tranquillity.

After church, on Sunday, the family dined at the parsonage, where Mr. Meredith had been making some alterations—he had turned his study, which adjoined the large parlour, into a bed chamber; he had been very attentive to the raising the gravel walk even with the glass folding doors, and had also made folding doors to the entrance: Lady Meredith's eyes filled, as her son explained to her, in a whisper, these several alterations, and Ellen actually gasped for breath when a recollection of the conversation with her uncle, suggested the use intended to be made of them.

The image of Percival, the anticipation of his return, the many secretly projected rambles, which, for the last week had kept her mind in a kind of rapturous delirium, now
K 3 dispersed,

dispersed; and in their room, her venerable parents, deprived of all the natural comforts of their inoffensive lives, driven from the seat of their ancestors, their large family thronged into the parsonage, and subjected to inconvenience and mortification—appeared in such terrible colours, that, unable to repress her emotions, she hastily left the side of Lady Meredith, and ran to an arbour in the garden, where a violent burst of tears relieved, without removing from her mind, the sad images fancy had raised there.

By the thickset hedge before her lay the road to Castle Howel, on the instant she raised her eyes a servant, in the Earl's livery, approached, he pulled off his hat and rode on. This little incident carried recollection back to Lord Castle Howel — His kindness had inspired her with a grateful affection, and his knowledge both of men and books had impressed on her mind a respect superior to what she felt for any other person; she wept to think, that, perhaps, she was now the
object

object of his anger, and for ever deprived of his friendship.

She raised her eyes a second time, and saw 'Squire Morgan trotting by towards the parsonage, he saw *her* too, but not with his usual servile look, he turned his bent brow hastily from her, and without the smallest inclination of his head passed on.

By an impulse as sudden as unpremeditated she also darted towards the house: Mr. Morgan, the suppliant humble Mr. Morgan, who would never take a chair before every individual of the family were seated, now sat in great state in the arm chair, with his hat on, though in the presence of Lady Meredith, who was smelling her salts and trembling every limb—his voice no longer soft and insinuating, but stern and discordant.

“Sir, I have never received a shilling interest for any of the sums I advanced, people will make me pay and I must be paid.”

K 4

“The

"The proposal I made you, Sir," answered Mr. Meredith, "of leaving Code Gwyn house and lands to my parents, during their lives, on condition of my relinquishing all future claim."

"It won't do, Mr. Parson, it won't do; I have lent more than the value of the estate, and must immediately take it into my own hands to bring myself home; I began the world with half a crown, and have no money to spare."

"If that is really so," said Lady Meredith, faintly, "it is but just Mr. Morgan should take care of himself: How long, Sir,—"

"I am sure I am very much concerned, Madam, but your Ladyship will please to recollect, I am an *humble*, a very *humble* man, my money has been got by dint of hard labour, I have no pretensions to gentility."

"Say

"Say no more, Sir, say no more," sighed Lady Meredith.

"You may stay a month or two, or even 'till Christmas."

Lady Meredith drew out her handkerchief, and Ellen throwing herself on her knees, hid her face in her lap and wept aloud.

Miss Meredith never, in all the romances she had read, met with any misfortune which was the consequence of running in debt, nor had she heard of a single knight who was armed against a foreclosure; but she had long considered Mr. Morgan as the demon of avarice, and not doubting but this was his hour of triumph, was secretly praying for a whirlwind to carry him away.

Miss Agnes wept because her mother wept, for let what would happen she had a very comfortable stock of wool and cheese.

Mr. Morgan arose and was stalking towards the door, when, casting a contemptuous glance at Ellen, "I am sorry to see your granddaughter returned on your hands, what good will her fine learning do her now? Aye aye, I have seen many such freaks in my time, Lord Castle Howel would have done a more charitable thing to get her a good service."

At this instant the sound of a carriage was heard, Mr. Morgan had hardly time to untie the silk handkerchief from his neck, and take off his hat, before Lord Castle Howel, his aunts and sister were in the room.

Nothing could equal the Earl's astonishment at the scene which presented itself, Ellen still kneeling. "What," said he, looking round, "can be the meaning of all this?"

Lady Margaret, whose cue it was to be very fond of Ellen, caught her in her arms, while the old ladies, with delighted looks, were examining her through their spectacles.

“Dear Lady Meredith, may I, without being impertinent?” said the Earl,——

The agitation of Lady Meredith’s spirits, the mortification she had suffered from Morgan’s behaviour, the agonies of her heart at the prospect before her, and now the sudden appearance of the Castle Howel family, so humiliating to all pride of circumstance overpowered her weak frame; in making an effort to rise, she sunk senseless on the floor; the cries of the affrighted Ellen rent the air, she screamed ’till she was black in the face, and, before Lady Meredith was recovered, had a convulsion fit.

The two old ladies were frightened out of their observations; Lady Margaret assisted the Miss Merediths in taking care of their mother, and the Earl himself carried Ellen into the garden.

Mr. Morgan, who heard, as *he* supposed from good authority, the Earl’s wife was

K.6. dead,

dead, and that he would marry immediately, had concluded Ellen was sent home and done with.

Lord Claverton's designs being insidious and wicked, were of a stamp so accordant to his own principles, he was presently master of them: But Lord Castle Howel's actions being the entire result of innate honor and refined sentiment, were enveloped in a mystery he could not penetrate; facts, however, were stubborn things: If his Lordship had got a bride, and one of the strangers was her, she was of too antient a date to lessen the interest of the beautiful Ellen, on whom he looked with delight at his entrance, and for whose distress he seemed to suffer so much. The crafty observer, therefore, had now to fear, the beauty of the granddaughter would raise a friend to rescue the estate out of his hands. It may here be asked, if avarice was Mr. Morgan's motive for calling in his money, why he should not rather rejoice at an event that promised payment without
so

so unpopular a step, as the foreclosure of the mortgage? And thus we answer.

According to the old assessments of the estates, the mortgage and interest really amounted to its value, but when it is remembered, the tenants and their descendants had, at their original rents, lived and died in their farms, allowing for the increasing value of landed property, the advantage of seizing on a complete manor, at the price it would have fetched five hundred years back, must be obvious; besides this, enveloped in the deepest recess of a heart devoted to avarice, fraught with hypocrisy, and swelling with malice, lay concealed schemes, and motives too black to be at once unravelled.

It had been the cautious policy of this man's life to lay his plans, and bring them step by step to light; this caution and policy were now in their full vigour; he instantly changed his measures, all the impenetrable prudence which had frosted over his features before the
Earl.

Earl entered, vanished ; the silk handkerchief which gave him, purposely, a ruffian-like appearance to Lady Meredith, now served to rub an uncommon redness into his eyes—he followed the Earl into the garden, where he found him recovering and soothing the poor Ellen, who no sooner saw Mr. Morgan, than she shrieked out, “Oh, save me, my dear Lord, from that wicked man.”

Mr. Morgan bowed to the ground.

“What man, my Ellen ; be composed, nobody shall hurt you.”

“But he will hurt my grandpapa, he will kill my dear grandmamma, he is going to turn us all out of Code Gwyn, and take our house from us, and my uncle will be obliged to keep us at the parsonage : Pray, my dear Lord, if it is at all in your power,” and she slid down on her knees.

Lord

Lord Castle Howel turned pale with astonishment; he knew the rapacity of Morgan's character, the fawning servility of his deportment had not imposed *on him*; he penetrated the thin disguise of affected humility, and never deigned to take the smallest notice of him, except what his own sense of politeness enforced, when he sometimes joined the hunt, and partook his public dinner.

Mr. Morgan again bowed very low, "My Lord, I humbly crave your Lordship —"

The Earl, impatient to administer consolation to the venerable matron within, as well as to set at rest the heart of Ellen, requested Mr. Morgan would go to Castle Howel directly, promised to follow him in six minutes, and having hastily consigned Ellen to the care of Lady Margaret, immediately joined the Merediths.

The result of a very short conversation was, Mr. Meredith's getting into the carriage with

with his Lordship, who begged the ladies would take tea at the parsonage, and he would return to escort them home.

Lady Meredith, though never in London, had an inbred politeness, that rendered her the ornament of whatever society she was in; she apologized, with a truth and grace that spoke to the heart, for the scene they had witnessed; and desired Ellen to make tea: The old ladies, charmed with the appearance of her health and vivacity, were exceedingly pleased both with their company and repast, and though it was nine before the carriage returned, they were far from thinking the time tedious.

Mr. Meredith's dark and expressive eyes shewed the essence of meekness and good humour, three hours before they had streamed in sympathy, with the sorrow of a beloved parent—they now beamed with placidity and content; He apologized to the ladies for his stay, after he had in silence pressed the hand
of

of his mother to his lips, and to his heart, and with a look of unutterable tenderness folded Ellen in his arms. Lady Meredith perceived a change in their favor; and Ellen, inexperienced as she was, concluded Lord Castle Howel was the good genius of the hour: — The old ladies had invited her to accompany them, but the carriage brought Mr. Meredith without the Earl, or an intimation her company was desired. She was delighted at the sight of her Patron at such a critical period, relying implicitly on the goodness of his heart, and easy in the confidence of his power; but, strange as it may appear, his offer of marriage never occurred to her mind; it had astonished, and, for the moment, perplexed her, but the entire silence on the subject, observed by all the family, the parental character in which Lord Castle Howel had become so dear and respectable, so kindly reassumed at the parsonage, together with some secret ideas, totally averse to marriage with *him*, had expelled an event so transient and unexpected.

When

When the coach drove up to Code Gwyn, Winifred waited to receive her mistress with more meaning than was usually discernable in her large black eyes; and, not a usual thing, close behind stood old Griffiths and his sister, with an equal quantity of treasured wisdom in theirs.

Mrs. Griffiths whispered Lady Meredith, and old Griffiths taking the Reverend by the button, led him across the hall in close confab.

Ellen had ascended half the stairs, with Winifred in attendance, when Lady Meredith desired she would accompany her, in the parlour. It was very seldom Ellen thought of the right or wrong in her grandmother's commands, and still seldomer, she disobeyed them; she turned with alacrity, and then for the first time, saw something more than usual in the looks of her servant.

“Cot

"Cot pless your dear soul, co into your room, here has peen the tivel to pay, Cot save us," whispered Winifred.

"What's the matter?" asked Ellen.

Now if any of the young ladies, (supposing this story should have the honor to be perused by such) has known what it is to think particularly well of a young male acquaintance, and should fancy the secret was known only to themselves, such young ladies will know, on all occasions of surprise, fear, or joy, the mind instantly reverts to the *favoured object*, and 'concludes, he is in some degree or other connected with it.

Percival Evelyn stood before Ellen's mental eye, as she uttered, "The what's the matter?"

"Ellen, you are waited for," said Lady Meredith.

"Cot

"Cot Almighty pless us, they won't let us speak—I have had a letter."

"From Percival?"

"No, as Cot is my judge, Miss, from his petters."

"Ellen, you are not used to keep my mother waiting," said Mr. Meredith gravely.

"There now, tivel take it, the Reverent must put in his hore!"

Percival's betters, thought Ellen, as she turned quick down stairs.

Lady Meredith and her son were already with Sir Arthur: The heart of affection when it has joyful tidings to communicate, is generally very brief, there needs no rhetoric, no ornament of speech to varnish a tale of happiness. Lady Meredith was weeping in the arms of her husband—Mr. Meredith and his

two

two sisters were kneeling at his feet, their joyful emotions divided betwixt thankfulness to heaven, and gratitude to him who had been the blessed means of saving them from distress; Miss Meredith and Ellen joined the rest of the family; the servants caught the enthusiasm; it was Sunday, and therefore there was no dance, but the old harper struck up, "Of a noble race was Shenkin." All was harmony and good humour 'till after supper, when Winifred being summoned, Mrs. Griffiths stationed behind Lady Meredith's chair, as her brother was behind Sir Arthur's, and the rest of the domestics dismissed, her Ladyship took a letter out of her pocket, and requested her son to read it.

Winifred, half crying and half scolding, her usual way of argument, protested against this, For why? The Reverent had no controul over her, she was twenty-one years of age, and, moreover, as coot as a married woman.

"A

"A married woman!" exclaimed Sir Arthur.

"I mean by contraction," answered Winifred, pertly, "Cot safe me, tis fery hard I can't receif a letter without all this hollobolo."

Mr. Meredith, who had been running his eye over the paper, now turning sternly, converted the voluble part of her argument into tears and loud sobs."

"When you receive letters in which the honor of any part of this family is concerned, you are answerable to us all; how dare you, or your correspondent, presume to name Ellen Meredith in your scrawls?"

Ellen's first suspicion, that Percival was the source of all this bustle, recurred with additional force; conscious that she thought of little but *him*, her natural inference was, that his thoughts were as busy about her. Winifred had confessed she had entered into a kind of league

league with him, and though, when absent in England, he had no means of reminding her of her promise, yet it was not unlikely he would do it, when he heard they were returned to Code Gwyn. This idea in her head, she sat blushing, while Sir Arthur, and indeed all the family, were impatiently urging Mr. Meredith to read the letter, which, after drawing his chair nearer, heming, and snuffing the candles, he began as follows.

“Mi-dearast Miss Winifred.”

Ellen ventured to look up, *that* could not be Percival's style to *her* servant.

Mr. Meredith went on.

“Mi art is broke by your cruel unkindness, and mi Lord's art is as bad hoff.”

“Poor tear Mr. Joseph,” sobbed Winifred.

Ellen

Ellen looked amazed.

Mr. Meredith resumed.

"We came to Bath, all to see our true lovers, and Madam Forrest told us the bitter news that you was fals arted."

"A wicked woman," sobbed Winifred.

"Indeed, Winifred," said Ellen, "you are very impertinent, I wonder how you dare call Mrs. Forrest a wicked woman?"

"Why did she call me fals arted, Miss, tell me but that? Cot safe me, what's coot for the coos is coot for the canter."

"Silence," said Sir Arthur, sternly, "go on, son."

"Which was the more bitter to me, has my Lord has got a promise of an excifeman's place for me, where of we might have a comfortable

fortable being of our own, and moreover kept our little farm too."

Winifred gave Mrs. Griffiths a nod, "you see, aunt —."

"And my Lord has been beautifying his fine seat, and new gilding, and painting, and laying out the ground, all for a farten young ledy, that shall be nameless."

Every eye was now fixed on Ellen, but as Ellen returned the look without a trait of confusion, Mr. Meredith went on.

"For, you know, Winifred, I never tell secrets, but my Lord 'can think of nothing, nor talk of nothing, but Miss Meredith."

"No more he can, I'll take my affitavit," cried Winifred.

"Any more than I can of my dear Winifred, and certainly we shall both die, if you break your vows and promises."

"Oh, Cot forbit. Amen! amen!"

"So now I bag if you have a sparkittle of love for your poor constant Joseph, you will write me word, by the return of post, as follows: Why you went in such a hurry from Bath? what you are now doing? whether that fauntering fellow, Evelyn, is still with the prig of a parson?"

Mr. Meredith stopped, and as poor Winifred, notwithstanding her partiality for Joseph, and her good thoughts, through him, of his Lord, really loved and respected all the Code Gwyn family, she could not hear the last sentence without feeling the utmost confusion.

"The prig of a parson!" repeated Sir Arthur.

"Aye,

"Aye aye, aye aye," cried old Griffiths, shaking his white locks over Sir Arthur's shoulder, "this is a brave husband you have got, huffey, who makes his game of God's minister."

"Of our Reverent!" added Mrs. Griffiths, with a look of horror.

"The fauntering fellow, Evelyn," said Mr. Meredith, resentfully.

"I wonder what poor Percival has done to him," joined Ellen.

"Go on, go on, my dear brother," said Mary, "this will be a charming subject for me to write Miss Jones."

"And whether you tell Miss Meredith, how dear my Lord loves her, and whether she loves him ever so little, and whether she has any other sweetheart, and whether you

can persuade her to come with you to the coppice to meet my Lord and I."

"What does the man mean?" cried Ellen, with unfeigned astonishment.

"Meet him! a miscreant! it is out of the practice of romance to meet a man by appointment!" said Miss Catherine, in an accent of disgust.

"Is there any more?" asked Lady Meredith, impatiently.

"Only the signature — Your loving husband, tell deth, Joseph Wilks."

"Meet in the coppice," said Mr. Meredith, "then I suppose this worthy spouse elect of yours, was apprehensive Mr. Evelyn would be sauntering in the way of his noble employer and himself."

Winifred

Winifred had not a word to say, the prig of a parson struck her dumb; but her tears were always ready, those she shed in great abundance.

“Oh, thou shame of thy family,” said old Griffiths, with indignation, “thou viper, not only to abuse the noble blood that nourished thee, but join a rag-a-muffin of a footman to seduce sweet Miss Ellen to be ruined.”

Of this accusation Winifred knew herself to be innocent; her own vanity confirmed every profession made by her lover, not once had she suspected either the honesty or sincerity of his addresses, and Ellen being beyond comparison the most beautiful creature she had ever seen, and being sincerely attached to her, it was natural to suppose her charms had, at least, made as indelible an impression on Lord Claverton; indeed, as Joseph had said and sworn it, the matter was so far past doubt, that had they continued at Bath 'till his Lordship's arrival, and he proposed, as was

intended, a double elopement, neither the danger or impropriety of the measure would have prevented her. Innocent therefore as to intention, and of an irritable temper, she entered into a vindictive explanation, in the course of which, by her defence both of her lover and his Lordship, she discovered to the family, what was entirely hid from herself—that Joseph and his Lord were pursuing a regular concerted plan, which, but for the sudden recall from Bath might have ended in the ruin of both mistress and maid: But, as it nevertheless appeared she was the innocent dupe of secret villany, she was consigned to the reprimands of her uncle and aunt.

“What ben’t I to undress Miss Ellen?” cried she, as she was leaving the room.

“Not ’till you are sensible of the errors of your conduct,” answered Lady Meredith.

It

It was now too late to enter into any farther discussion of the letter with Ellen, but the occurrences of the day were of too interesting a nature to permit the other part of the family to part, before every particular had been canvassed over among them.

John Morgan, the rich 'squire, who, as Catherine described him, bought every body's estates, and lived in a corner of his own house, feared by many, respected by few, and loved by none, left his native village, Code Gwyn, an indigent adventurer; his father, a dissolute pauper of the Parish, got the then Rector, who had taken some pains in having his son taught reading and writing, to recommend him to a person of respectable connexions, of that country, who was then a successful and opulent Merchant in London. Martin, the paternal name of the now 'Squire, was fortunately engaged by Mr. Morgan as underporter, where he ingratiated himself first into the good opinion of his master, a plain fair meaning man, who raised him from his me-

nial servant to his principal trust in the business, and next into the heart of his only child. Miss Morgan was motherless, and her father's excessive fondness, by keeping her constantly at home, deprived her of the advantage she would have imbibed by associating with well educated young women.

Martin was handsome, and, even then, could bow very low where occasion suited: He did not run away with Miss Morgan, but he took care to alarm her father with fears for her life, if he refused his consent. The old man had a good deal of Cambrian pride about him, he withstood his daughter's entreaties, but her tears conquered him, and he consented to their marriage. Martin succeeded Mr. Morgan in his business, and buried his wife the same year, by whom he had an only daughter, who, in hopes of making a woman of fashion, he kept at a capital boarding school 'till she was eighteen, when his father-in-law, who had retired to his estate at Code Gwyn some years, died, leaving all his fortune to him,

him, and his granddaughter, on condition of their taking the name of Morgan, which, as that of Martin was by no means deficient in notoriety, and Code Gwyn the place his vanity wished to shine at, notwithstanding his mean origin, was a very acceptable clause in a will that left him, with his own savings, one of the richest men in Britain, and as soon as an act of parliament changed John Martin to John Morgan, he took possession.

Elizabeth Morgan was mild, sensible, and virtuous; she accompanied her father to Code Gwyn, and the late Mr. Morgan having lived in habits of friendship with the Merediths, Edmund, just then returned from College, fell passionately in love with her: Sir Arthur would not hear of a connexion so degrading, notwithstanding the immense wealth of her father, and *his* views were much higher for his daughter.

Mr. Meredith honored his parents, and inherited their pride of blood; but, spite of all

his efforts, to conquer his attachment, it increased with every interview.

Sir Arthur's objection was an affront, though he was as much averse to the match as himself, Mr. Morgan secretly vowed never to forgive.

The young lady was far from encouraging Mr. Meredith's passion, though she was in habits of intimacy with the Miss Merediths, then about her own age.

Her pleasant manners and sweetness of temper conquered the dislike the neighbourhood entertained against her father; every body took notice of and invited her to their houses, and she was a frequent and favorite guest of Lady Margaret Howel's. The fair Elizabeth flattered the hopes and pride of her father; he knew enough of the world to be sure his daughter with 80,000*l.* would be received into families, whose blood might be traced to the Conqueror, though the poor
proud

proud Code Gwyn family, had the impertinence to remember his leaving the hovel in which he was born, to seek better bread than they gave his parents; fond of the aggrandizements of his daughter, she never made a connexion he did not immediately canvas in every light, to try whether it promised to lead to the desired point.

The first glance from the eyes of Elizabeth determined the fate of our young parson. Naturally of a studious pensive turn, his mind retreated from futile amusements: He studied much before he saw Miss Morgan, and after he had seen her, she mixed in every sentiment, and he saw her in every line he read: He had a little taste for drawing, her face, in all attitudes, ornamented his study, her eyes were penciled on the margins of even his sermons, and he wrote the initials of her name in the blank leaves of all his books: His walks were within sight of the house, and if, after a ramble of three or four hours, he saw Elizabeth, he returned satisfied. This often

happened, for all her amusements were solitary walks, in the most sequestered parts of the neighbourhood; but her health grew daily worse: Her father, angry at the ravage sickness made in her lovely countenance, and alarmed at the consequence, instead of soothing, reproached, and threatened the fair invalid. He took it into his head Meredith was the secret source of her disorder, and vowed to give his fortune to hospitals, and turn her out of doors, if she thought of that beggarly parson.

Elizabeth wept and trembled, without answering her stern father, who, as her health still declined, became every day more fretful.

Meredith, shocked at the change in her looks, and unable to conceal the anguish of his soul, often absented himself from her and became a prey to despair: During one of these self-inflicted penances, he was surprised by an abrupt visit from Mr. Morgan, who vociferously

vociferously charged him with having stole his daughter from his house that morning.

The surprise and grief which took possession of Mr. Meredith's countenance were proofs sufficient of his innocence; and Morgan, forgetting for a minute his animosity, informed him, that his daughter, after bidding him in a more tender than common manner good night, had gone early to rest; that, in the morning, on her not coming to breakfast, he searched her apartments, where she had not been in bed; that on opening her wardrobe, they found she had taken best part of her cloaths; and, in fine, that she had left his house.

Our parson's countenance brightened at this: So visible and increasing had been her dejection, he had, at first the strongest apprehensions for her fate; but she lived, and he trusted had happiness in pursuit, not, indeed, *with him*, that was self evident; but *self* was not in this interesting hour attended to! —

Morgan

Morgan secretly triumphed over the parson, who, he conceived must be terribly galled at the disappointment; and he became more reconciled to the elopement of his daughter, since he found the poor Meredith was not her companion; He, however, immediately set off for town, but though enquiries nor even money was spared to discover her, she was not heard of 'till eight months after, when he received anonymous information, that the corpse of his daughter lay at a house on Highgate hill, from whence he was requested to take it for interment.

It was not in human nature for a father to be unmoved in such a situation; he hastened to the place and found his only child dead: The people of the house were strangers to her and her connexions; she had been removed there for air, a month had been paid in advance for the lodging, and a man and woman servant had attended her, who disappeared within an hour after she died; and though every thing about her bore the appearance of elegance,

elegance, and even affluence, they had so dexterously managed, as to escape without suspicion of their intention, 'till, after a violent bustle, a silence, which continued more than an hour, induced the landlady to open the chamber door, where she found the lady dead, and the apartment cleared of every thing that could possibly lead to a discovery of the thieves, for that they had been guilty of theft admitted not a doubt.

Mr. Morgan wept and raved as he contemplated the corpse of his child; and after passing two hours in vain regrets he had ever been a father, almost distracted, left the scene of mortality. But tho' change of place could not remove the reproach from his mind, which he endeavoured to appease, by such a ridiculous parade of funeral grandeur, as served to gratify his own vanity, and swell the undertaker's bill: But the deceased left a more lasting monument of his hard heart than the expensive one he placed to her memory in the parish church where she died: He libe-

rally rewarded the people of the house, and paid them a high price for their good report; he took every possible means to conceal the harshness of his conduct from the world, and making a precipitate end of his concerns in town, hastened to his Welch mansion, where, he flattered himself, the event would not be known. But rumour, with his hundred tongues, told the fate of the young Elizabeth in a thousand different ways—Meredith heard all, and found one sad certainty, the woman who possessed his warm heart was no more; a fever seized his brain, followed by a nervous debility that totally incapacitated him from performing his functions, and for three years left his spirits quite sunk, his health impaired, and all his affection for woman buried with his adored Elizabeth.

Mr. Morgan's regret for the untimely death of his daughter was changed into a detestation of her memory, by some discoveries made in applications to him after her death; he never would hear her name mentioned, and, dead

dead to every generous feeling, devoted his life to the accumulation of riches, and the gratification of his passions—he was in the constant habit of lending money to people in distressed circumstances, and of conceiving a vicious inclination for modest women, and it was not seldom he made the husband and father give good security for money he pretended to advance to the charms of the wife or daughter.

The Code Gwyn estate groaned for the axe, no wood had been cut but for domestic use for more than a century back, it was, as poor Brown would have said, “full of capabilities.” The manor was extensive, the ground rich, and finely laid out; the mansion house, it is true, was out of repair, but Mr. Morgan’s keen eye ran it over, he knew how little, with the old materials, and wood and lime on the premises, it would cost to build a new one; then, to turn the haughty Meredith’s out of their vaunted antient home, was a gratification which he never lost sight of! He
insinuated

insinuated himself into Sir Arthur's confidence by an affected gratitude for the charities bestowed on his family, and in the zeal of apparent friendship, supplied the easy improvident Baronet with sum after sum, 'till, like a thunderbolt, the notice of foreclosure shewed them the gulph before them; and the wolf, having gained his point, dropped his sheep's skin.

Mr. Morgan, not content with ruining the Code Gwyn family, vented the concealed rancour of his heart in reproaches and insults, and these were so often repeated, that they reconciled themselves to the removing to the parsonage, to avoid any further intercourse with their narrow minded creditor:— Yet, to leave the house where their ancestors lived and died, to break up their family, to take the bread and asylum from their grey-headed domestics, to assign a set of honest dependants to the mercy of a rapacious miser, to become a tax on the duty of their son, no longer to behold objects which time had endeared

deared to their view, was terrible. Every part of the family dreaded the impending misery, yet all were solicitous to conceal from each other their feelings.

The meeting of Mr. Morgan at the parsonage, was at the request of Mr. Meredith, whose last hope rested on a doubt old Griffiths had suggested, of Sir Arthur's right to mortgage one part of the estate; but the money had been advanced, and, therefore, however the point of law might stand, he was not of a turn to dispute payment, although he thought he might honorably avail himself of this suggested advantage so far, as to retain the possession of the manor during his parent's life; but he had to do with a man well acquainted with the honor, or, as he called it, the folly of his debtors.

The reader has seen the success of the meeting; we have now to follow them, from Mr. Meredith's account, to Castle Howel.

During

During the ride from Code Gwyn, Lord Castle Howel made himself master of the rapacious views of Mr. Morgan, as well as the supine negligence of the Merediths; he well knew what money Mr. Morgan would advance was on perfect security, and worth any other person's while to do the same; at all events, he resolved the house and grounds should be left in the possession of the old people for life, *that* being settled, he eagerly asked, if Ellen had yet been made acquainted with his proposals.

Mr. Meredith's answer to his Lordship's letter had not reached London before the impatience of the old ladies, to say nothing of his Lordship's, induced them to leave it; the question, therefore, at such a period, was extremely embarrassing, as it must lead to an explanation, which might entirely frustrate all the plans the Earl had been concerting in their favor.

Lord

Lord Castle Howel observed his embarrassment, and felt it was no good augur for him. He was silent while Mr. Meredith was considering how to soften a refusal his natural frankness forbid him to conceal—but the more he considered the more he found himself at a loss.

The Earl, then, with a forced smile, said, he feared Ellen's heart was not in his cause, he saw he was rejected, but hoped she had not been urged too warmly—Mr. Meredith would forgive him—he meant in reference to the circumstances of the family.

Mr. Meredith coloured. “My Lord, you little know either Ellen or the family had they been capable of urging such a motive, I should have been spared the pain I feel in conveying to your Lordship—but I have written to you.”

“Forgive me,” answered the Earl, “we will say no more on the business,” and he turned

turned the conversation to the improvements on his own estate.

When Morgan was admitted, after what had been settled in the coach, Mr. Meredith was surprised to hear the Earl desire him to send the demands on the Code Gwyn estate to his attorney, and it should be paid.

Do I hear right, thought he—"The whole mortgage, my Lord?"

"What, you know I am not rich, and wonder to hear me talk of paying off mortgages? But I take this to be a good thing, or Morgan would not have it."

Morgan bowed the lower, to hide his chagrin, and Lord Castle Howel ordered a bottle of Madeira, "Come, Morgan," said he, "you are disappointed, I know, and to confess the truth, so am I, but here is a bumper, to better luck another time."

"My

"My Lord, I beg your Lordship to believe," again bowing.

"Believe, why I know it," replied the Earl, "but as I *will* pay the money, and as you *must* receive it, drink your glass and make the best of it."

Morgan could not possibly contradict an Earl, who was not in his debt, and therefore become quite friends with Mr. Meredith, and after begging his Lordship would not think of an attorney, in a business, which should be settled exactly as his Lordship pleased, humbly took his leave.

Meredith would have made acknowledgments, but the Earl forbid him, and without again mentioning Ellen they parted.

Every thing now went well at Code Gwyn, but this calm was of short duration, for David, whose wife had lived at Castle Howel, brought news that distressed them all, the Earl was indisposed.